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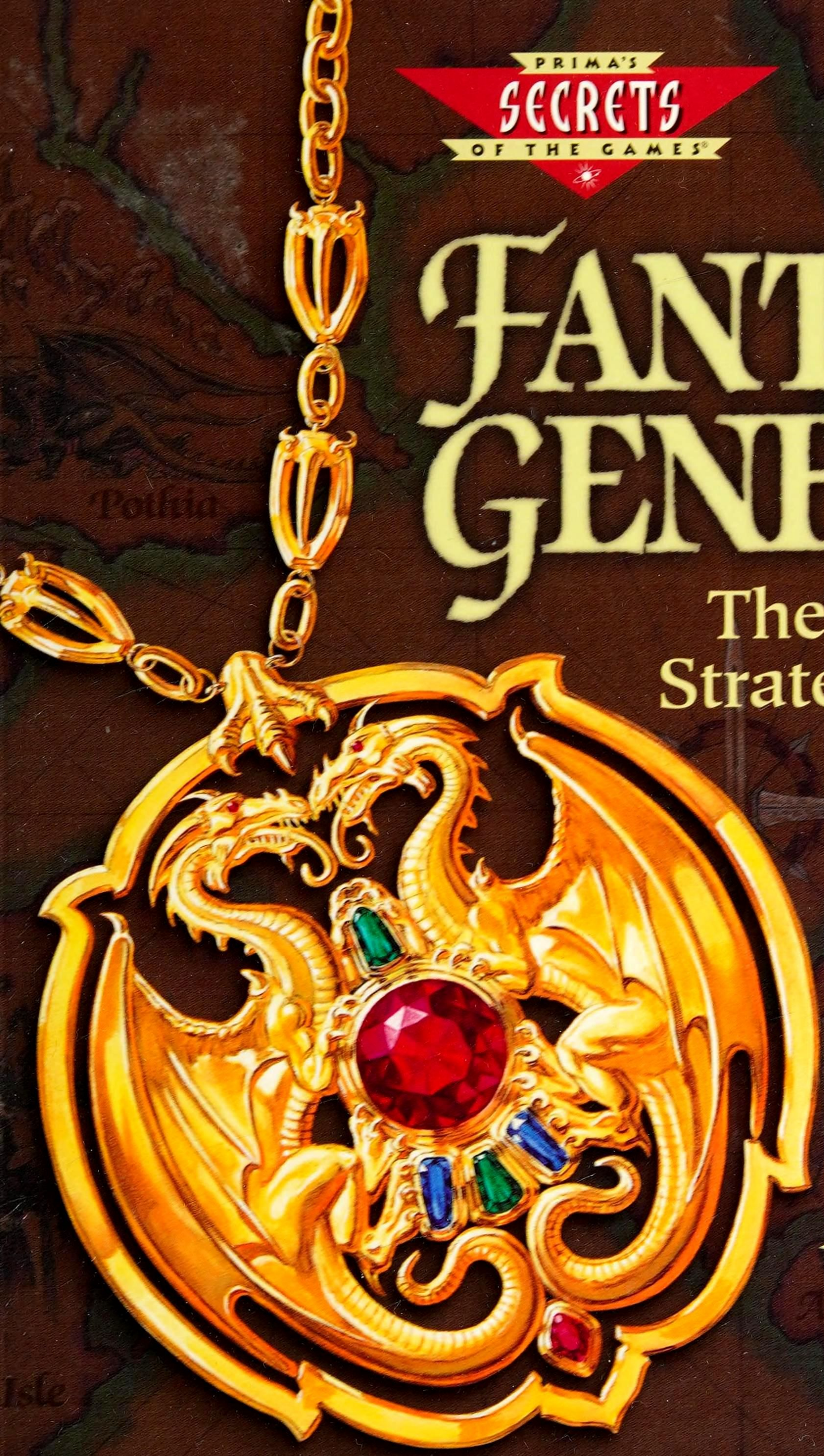
FANTASY GENERAL™

The Official Strategy Guide



Optimum Strategies for EVERY Scenario!

TERRY COLEMAN

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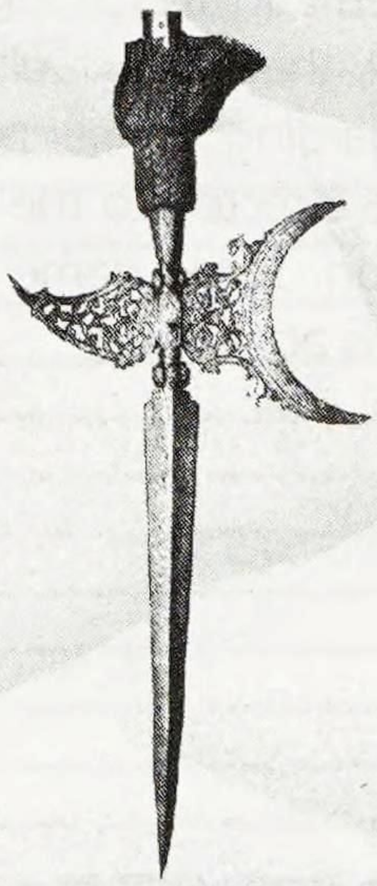

Terry Coleman

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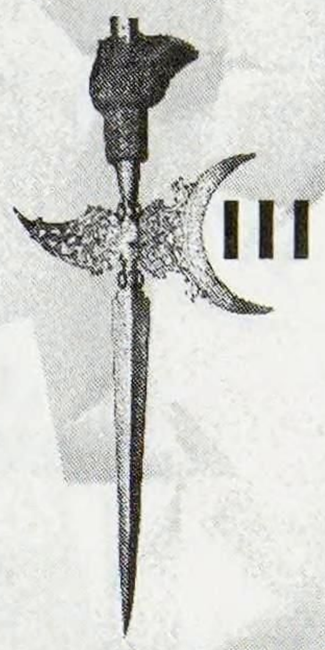

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CHAPTER 1

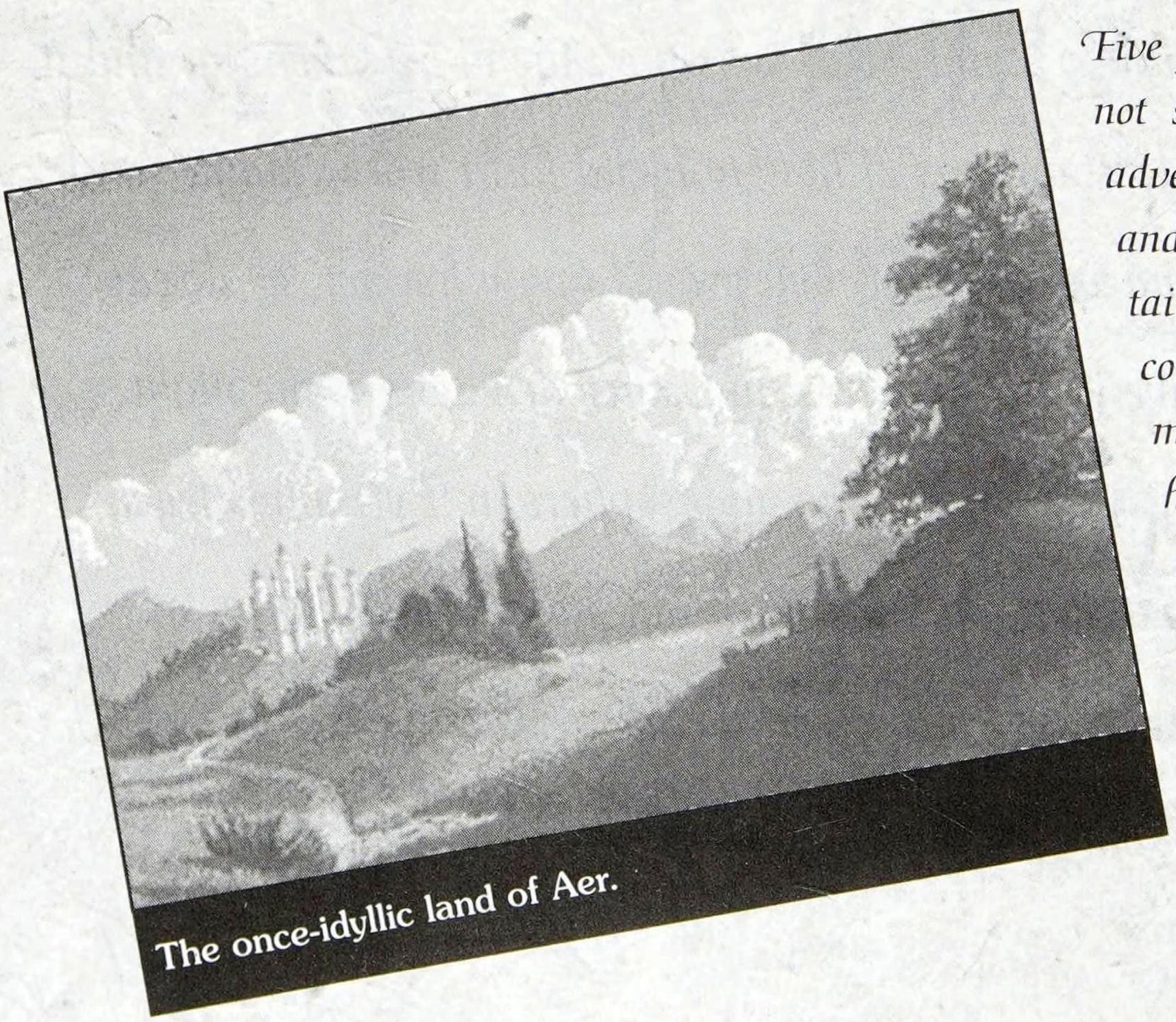
Whence Comes the Hero?

Aer was once a peaceful land, where the golden-throated melodies of birds accompanied farmers through the day so that their labors might produce ripe harvests and legendary wines. Villages bustled with shopkeepers selling exotic wares from the Isle of the Four Winds, while jugglers and lute-players vied for the attention (and coins) of tourists. In faraway Arduir, Elven bards held audiences spellbound with tales of a bygone era, when Human and Elf had set aside their differences to join forces against the evil Orcs, where the Stones of St. Sirion now stand. This was the Age of Awakening, and it promised new understandings of how to blend hard work, magic, and new mechanical marvels so that none would know hunger, or disease, or ever again live in fear of Orcs and other denizens of the night. Yet not all was as it seemed. The philosophers at Eyranthos teach us that good may triumph over evil, but 'tis a fleeting thing, as one may not exist entirely without the other. During the time of plenty, evil bided its time . . . and waited . . . and grew.

Eventually a greater evil manifested itself in the form of the Shadowlord, who secreted away the Orcs, Goblins, fell Undead creatures, and other horrors best not spoken of, even in the light of day.

The first hint of danger began with Goblin and Orc raiding parties, which the Council of Five's greatest efforts were unable to dispel. Finally, the Shadowlord became so intoxicated with his own power that he raised a new continent from the sea: Fire Isle—shrouded in ill vapors and oozing with volcanoes, which gaped like open sores in the land—became a symbol for all that is unnatural. Terrified, the free peoples—the Elves, Dwarves, and Humans—dared not invade this island fortress, and the Shadowlord unleashed his army of terrors on an unsuspecting Aer. The ranks of his legions had swelled to seemingly impossible size, and the mages recruited to the nether side sported terrible magics, burning entire villages to the ground with fireballs and summoning foul creatures from unknown dimensions.

The forces under the Council of Five fought bravely, but they could not stem such a relentless tide of adversaries. Leaders were captured and put to death, or their spirits tainted so that they might cooperate with the enemy. Far more quickly than anyone could have anticipated, the war was over, and all of Aer vanquished. The Shadowlord, content with his victory, turned his attention to the Netherworld, striving to increase his already mighty power through another plane.



The once-idyllic land of Aer.

To maintain his stranglehold on the land, the Shadowlord placed lieutenants over each of the main continents: Dragga the slothful Orc King exploits the land of Keldonia; Aelcar the Shadow Wizard builds his strength at the expense of the inhabitants of the Isle of the Four Winds, waiting for the day when his power may challenge the Shadowlord himself; Ssazikar the Snake feels much at home in the jungles of Avernion; and the snowy mountains of Pothia are perfect for the icy heart and harsh rule of Maloch of Blacklance.

Today, with the Shadowlord's attention elsewhere, resistance has begun to build. In Pothia, small bands of warriors—some armed only with spears of hardened ice and slings of garlic and stones—chase the Undead from their lairs in the mountains. Common folk are heartened by whispered tales of heroes, such as Malric the Dragonlord, whose mount has cleared the air of the scourge of Flying Snakes. And yet, such deeds are not in themselves enough. The small pockets of resistance must be united by a strong leader. The Council of Five, secure in their hiding place, continues to look for a savior for our fair land.

A CHAMPION IS FOUND

Then, one day, a champion arrives, accompanied by a small but determined force. As the infantry passes the small village of Runcia, the glint of their burnished armor can be seen half a league away, so the villagers say. Then come the Skirmishers, brandishing their pitchforks, defying anyone to question their unkempt appearance. Archers follow, bristling with so many arrows they resemble angry, determined porcupines. But the Heavy Cavalry silences the crowd: Men of grim visage ride massive steeds and carry huge lances that seem to part the very air itself. As the army of the Council of Five marches toward Fellstan, the villagers are convinced that this is, indeed, the promised army of liberation.

The proud troops are scarcely out of town when they are beset by Goblins, their hideous shrieks sending the inexperienced Skirmishers scurrying for cover. The leader calmly rallies the broken formation and dispatches infantry to deal with the enemy. Meanwhile, the advanced force reaches Fellstan, finding not only the expected Goblins but a group of Orcs as well! Their slumber having thus been disturbed, the Orc Heavy Infantry rush toward the lighter-armed troops of the Council, salivating at the thought of an exotic and unexpected dinner.

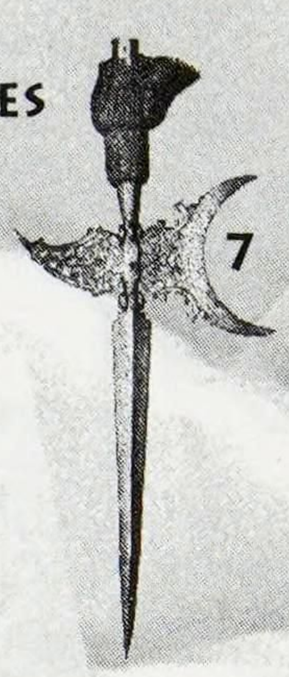
Oddly enough, it is the diminutive Elf Archers who save the day. So accurate is their fire that not even armor forged in the volcanoes of the Dragonscale Archipelago is enough to save the Shadowspawn from the deadly shafts. The wounded Orc and Goblin survivors try to regroup, but they are intercepted by the massed units of Heavy Cavalry. The unknown champion searches his heart for mercy but finds none, only memories of repression at the hands of these unearthly enemies, and so he silently watches as the remaining enemy troops are crushed under thundering hooves.

The champion quickly advances and soon liberates the Shrine of Hespae, and afterward, a group of Apprentice magicians offers to join the noble cause. Accepting their fealty with thanks, the leader ponders how he can best use these new recruits. Perhaps they could summon Banshees to throw at the enemy. In any case, he knows they will need more than just a handful of units, however brave, and a clever spell or two to defeat the Shadowlord and his minions. The road ahead is long and uncertain. Even so, today is a good day—the first step toward ultimate victory over Evil. Whatever the sacrifice, he vows to free all the lands of Aer—or give his life trying.

The Scarlet Plain is the first conflict in the war to liberate Aer.

CHAPTER 2

A Champion Emerges



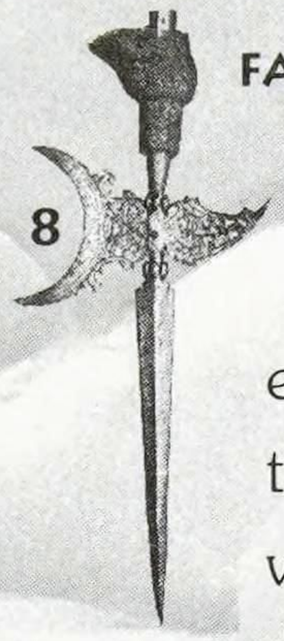
Selecting a Character for the Campaign

Epic battles with evil form the heart of *Fantasy General*, where you are the great military leader chosen to lead the world of Aer from darkness into light. Although unfettered by the restriction of a historical simulation, *Fantasy General* is still well grounded in myth, folklore, and fantasy literature. It offers a familiar milieu for strategy gamers or anyone interested in the eternal struggle between good and evil.

At first, the Council provides you with only a small army, so that you will be mistaken by the Shadowlord's minions as merely another local rebellion. Cynics might also say that the Council, for all its good intentions, is really only covering its posterior, like any bureaucracy—should you fail, they will no doubt disavow any knowledge of your actions. But as you gain victories and your fame increases, volunteers and heroes will flock to your banner. Even the Council will find ways to help you with gifts of gold and increased support.

Your legend grows as you make your way successfully through each battle. During your campaigns, you liberate each continent of Aer in turn, facing ever-greater challenges—there is no reward for failure. You either win and move on to the next struggle or come home on your shield. Of course, the charm of a computer game is that death is rarely fatal: save early—and often—and you will triumph to the highest levels of difficulty in this extremely challenging game.

This book will cover all of the strategic options that arise in the *Fantasy General* campaigns (see the game manual for an initial discussion of game mechanics). Here, we begin with a discussion of the various champions and their strengths and weaknesses. In the next chapter, movement is scrutinized, so you can get those Heavy Cavalry (and Barbarians, Pikemen, and Chariots)



efficiently rolling down the road. A dissection of the combat system follows in the next two chapters: Chapter 4 describes how the game's combat system works in general (lovers of hit-point formulas, turn here), and Chapter 5 discusses specific fighting strategies for your various troops (those pesky Skirmishers really *can* be useful). Chapter 6 offers comparisons of the different types of units, from slow Siege Engines to their lightning-fast alternative, Air Power: Dragons, Flying Monkeys, Phoenix Hawks, and others. Following this is a chapter on the types and uses of magic.

Along the way, you'll find detailed charts, tables, and hints on how to maximize your army's efficiency—both in terms of overall strategy and specific battle tactics. What good are Beast units against Undead Cavalry? Are Silver Dragons worth the expense? The answers to these and a thousand other questions will be revealed.

After you know how to build and maintain an army, then comes the hard part: winning battles. Each continent of Aer is broken down, showing which battles to fight, which you might want to avoid, and which ones are risky but worth the effort for the special volunteers and magic items they bring to your army. If you're into head-to-head play, you'll want to take a look at the closing section on the Arena, where you can design your own army to vie with other Fantasy Generals for the dominance of Aer.

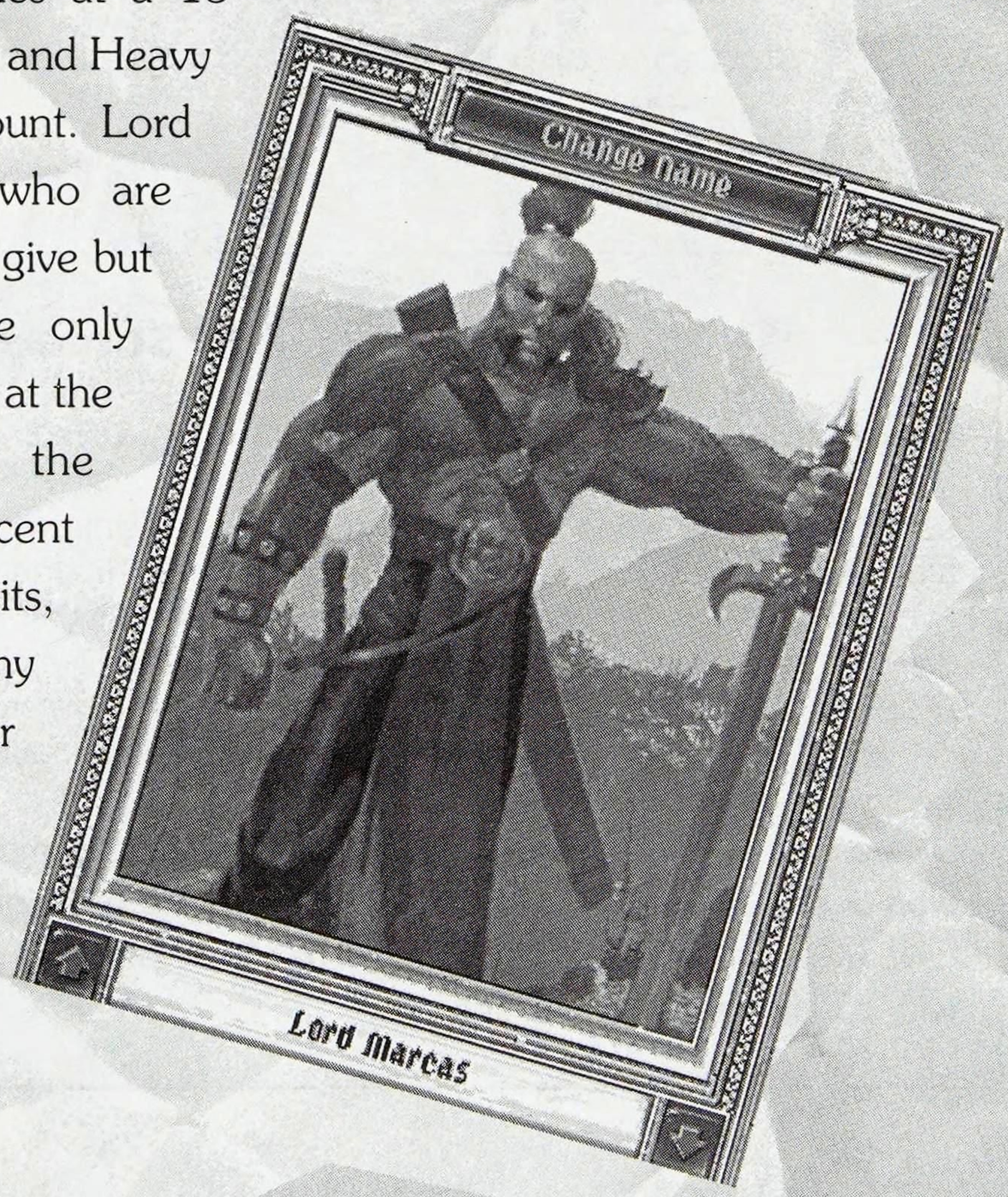
THE FOUR CHAMPIONS

As with any good strategy game, *Fantasy General* has elements of role-playing. Part of this comes from the exotic units: the Fire Beetles, refugees from B-film lore; the ferocious Werebears, who make Grizzlies seem like teddy bears; the hero Boric Stiffbeard, who could star in his own game series. All of these add spice, variety, and even a bit of humor to the often grim nature of battle.

But the main aspect of role-playing comes from the main character you choose to portray. All four of the great Champions can achieve ultimate victory over the Shadowlord and his forces, but some offer a more straightforward path than others. The following sections describe the strengths and weaknesses of each Champion.

LORD MARCAS

If you are having a hard time getting past the first few battles, you should consider playing the Warlord, Lord Marcas. A battle-hardened mercenary, he gives the most obvious military bonuses to your army–he will quickly recruit a larger core army. He also researches at a 15 percent discount and purchases Light and Heavy Infantry units at a 20 percent discount. Lord Marcas is a magnet for heroes, who are attracted by his fame and legend. To give but one example, the Warlord is the only character who can recruit a Sergeant at the Battle of Hoaroot Forest. Also, the Warlord generally has about a 20 percent better chance to pick up volunteer units, which don't count against the army limit (although they do leave your army when you travel to a new continent), making his army even larger. Finally, any units you recruit as the Warlord start with one level of experience, rather than the



usual zero (see Chapter 4 for more on this). About the only problem with the Warlord is his lack of Magic or Air abilities. An obvious strategy then, is to develop Sorcerers and Flying units early on. This is by far the easiest character with which to win the game, especially for those more comfortable with traditional wargames.

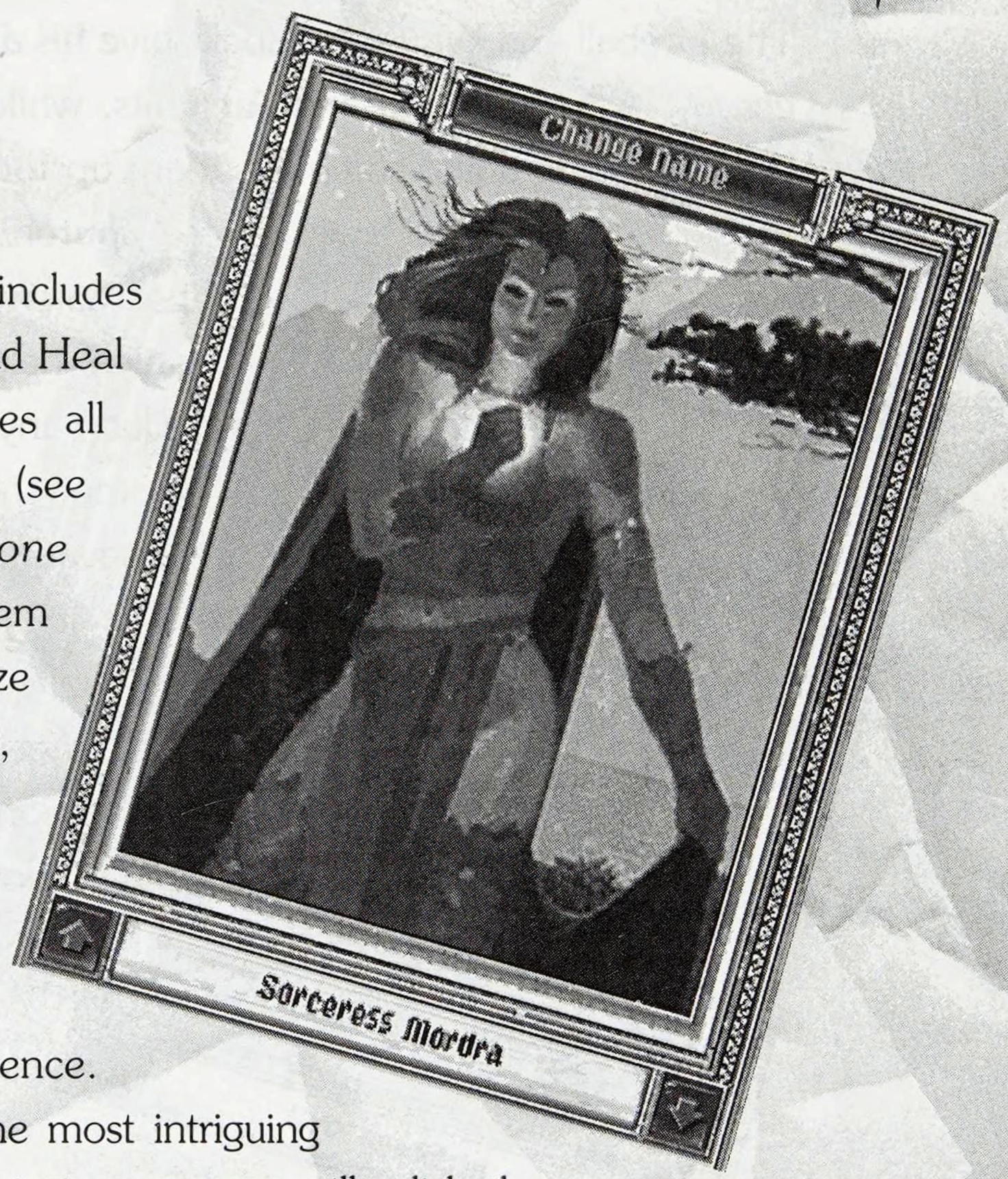
SORCERESS MORDRA

The Sorceress Mordra hails from the hostile environs of Avernion, where she learned to survive by honing her wits and natural affinity for magic. She is the only character to start the game with Beast units. In particular, the excellent Barbarian troops and inexpensive Fire Beetles give her a quick start. She also summons two random magic units, which vary per continent as in Table 2-1 below.

Table 2-1: The Sorceress Summons

Continent	DR=1	DR=2	DR=3	DR=4
Keldonia	Air Warrior	Unicorn	Wing Rider	Balloon Hanger
Isle of Four Winds	Treemen	Elf Chariots	Pegasi	Balloon Rider
Avernion	Giant	Hydra	Turtle Dragon	Bicycle Rider
Pothia	Silver Hawks	Earth Elemental	Sandman	Ghost Rider
Dragonscale Archipelago	Monk of Meo	Nightmare	Phoenix Hawk	Cloud Ship
Fire Isle	Monk of Meo	Nightmare	Phoenix Hawk	Cloud Ship

DR stands for "dieroll." Should the DR be the same number twice, you would receive 2 of the same type of unit—two rolls of "3" on Avernion would give you 2 Turtle Dragons, a nice problem to have. Keep in mind that these units are ephemeral, and you will get new randomly-generated units with each new battle scenario.



Her limited spell assortment includes Plague, to attack enemy troops, and Heal Beast, which immediately removes all wounds from friendly Beast units (see the Chapter 7), even those in a *Zone of Control* (see Chapter 3). Problem is, Mordra is limited in army size (eight units on the first continent), and Beast units, good as they are, may not upgrade. So playing Mordra competitively means that you must sometimes keep lesser-grade units with better experience. Of course, this conflict is one of the most intriguing features of the game, and veteran strategy gamers will relish the challenge of trying to win with a character who is a definite underdog.

ARCHMAGE KRELL

The Archmage Krell is even better suited for those with eclectic playing styles. The Fireball and Whirlwind spells give his army an instant counterattack versus enemy Heavy Ground and Air units, while Fear and Weakness allow you to target specific units, softening them up for the kill (see Chapter 7). Krell may also purchase and research Magical and Spellcaster units at a 20 percent discount, which helps to keep his army competitive. Plus, any recruits start with one level of experience less than the parent unit, a big advantage (see Chapter 4). But until you gain a lot of experience, the scarcity of units (again, a lower army maximum) and the lower morale (20 percent less than normal) will probably find you bogged down on the third continent.

KNIGHT MARSHAL CALIS

The most-balanced Champion is Knight Marshal Calis. Like the Warlord, Calis's main focus is leading Mortal troops, but he receives a 20 percent discount when recruiting and purchasing any Cavalry. Thus, you learn early

how to skirmish with Light Cavalry and follow up with Heavy Cavalry for the hammer blow. The 20 percent morale bonus is important when deciding who retreats, and the ability to convert wounds to a morale loss (which improves by continent) will save a lot of core units from destruction. The Marshal only has one spell, but it's a life-saver—literally. The Heal spell allows Calis, once per battle, to heal all units under his command. The timing of the Heal spell makes for some interesting tactics, which I'll discuss further in Chapter 5. For now, this is the character I most recommend, if you want to really learn how to play the game.

CHAPTER 3

Medieval Maneuver

How Movement Really Works

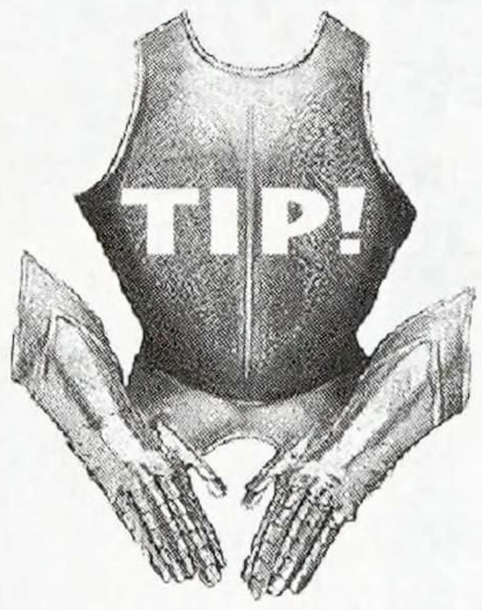
In the stereotypical Western, a ragged, whiskered old coot bursts into the local saloon and exclaims, "That ol' Black Bart and his gang have rustled all o' Sunshine Steve's cattle and replaced his brand with ther'n. What're we gonna do?" At which point, one of the more intelligent of the male cigarette ad-types suggests, "Bart n' his boys are pretty tough. We'll need to get a posse together." And, amid shouts of "Yee-haw" and "We'll show them varmints what for," the Good Guys all leap on their horses—everyone has a horse, and the animals, noble steeds that they are, never seem to need rest—rush off to the climactic showdown with the Bad Guys.

You can use the same strategy, if you want, in *Fantasy General:* simply wrangle up some Fire Beetles and Elf Cavalry, enlist the aid of local Barbarians, and rush off to tackle the Goblin and Orc banditos as the Knight Marshal Calis. The game is that easy to get into. But, as much fun as the posse method might be, it lacks subtlety and depth for the long haul. There's nothing wrong hootin' and hollerin' down the ridge, but to achieve ultimate victory over the Shadowlord, you'll need a more thoughtful approach.

While all of the advice and descriptions that follow apply to all forms of the game, including individual scenarios and head-to-head play, the main focus of the next several chapters is campaign mode. In *Fantasy General*, the campaign is the real delight, not merely because it offers a tough computer opponent but because the plot is more intricate and ultimately more satisfying than in many strategy games.

GETTING UP & RUNNING

Before we get too immersed in mechanics, let's take a quick look at the interface. Those familiar with other games in this series will notice that *Fantasy General* shares many features of *Panzer General* and *Allied General*; it is not a Windows '95 product like the latter, however.



If you want to run Fantasy General *in Windows '95, it does not run quite as cleanly as the similarly DOS-based* Panzer General. *You are better off running* Fantasy General *in DOS, either with a memory manager or in DOS/4GW mode–check the READ.ME file on your* Fantasy General *CD-ROM. If you still wish to run the game in Win '95 (or if that is your only operating system), you have two choices:*

1) Run the game from a DOS shell in Win '95. While this may work, you are likely to experience sound problems, and the cinematics will not run as smoothly, especially on quad-speed and slower CD-ROM drives.

2) I recommend that you go to "Shut Down" in Win '95 and select "Restart in MS-DOS mode," then run the game from a DOS prompt. Essentially, you are running DOS 7, and this approach works well with Fantasy General *on most systems. If you still experience problems, try selecting 8-bit sound instead of 16-bit.*

The interface itself is very simple. In fact, it's likely that newcomers will have less trouble with it than veterans of *Allied* and/or *Panzer General* (novices have less to "unlearn"). One nice touch is that you no longer have to click back and forth between rows of icons, as in *Panzer General*, because the *Fantasy General* interface has icons lining either side (see Figure 3-1). The Sound Effects and Music buttons are pretty self-explanatory, but keep in mind that even if you don't listen to the music, the program still searches for it—you can't pop in your favorite music CD and slay Dragons to Rolling Stones riffs. No *Fantasy General* CD in the drive, no "Tumbling Dice" in the game, as it were.

DON'T SAVE TOO HASTILY

The Fast Load and Fast Save buttons are simple enough to use. What the manual doesn't make clear is that this is not an additional saved game slot. If you Fast Save, it goes into the first saved game slot—overwriting any preexisting saved game—which could cause you some distress if you had reached the third continent with, say, Krell (in the first saved game slot), and were starting a new campaign with the Warlord. You can, of course, simply back up your saves on a floppy. I would suggest instead that you make a new DOS directory called C:\FGSAVES, then make separate subdirectories for each character—Mordra, Marcas, Krell, Calis—backing up each in turn as you play them. This can easily be done in Windows 3.1 File Manager, or in Win '95 (select New Folder). Whether you also choose to back up via tape or the newer Zip drives is a personal matter, though it's hard to be too careful. Regardless, remember to leave the first saved game slot open for Fast Saves.

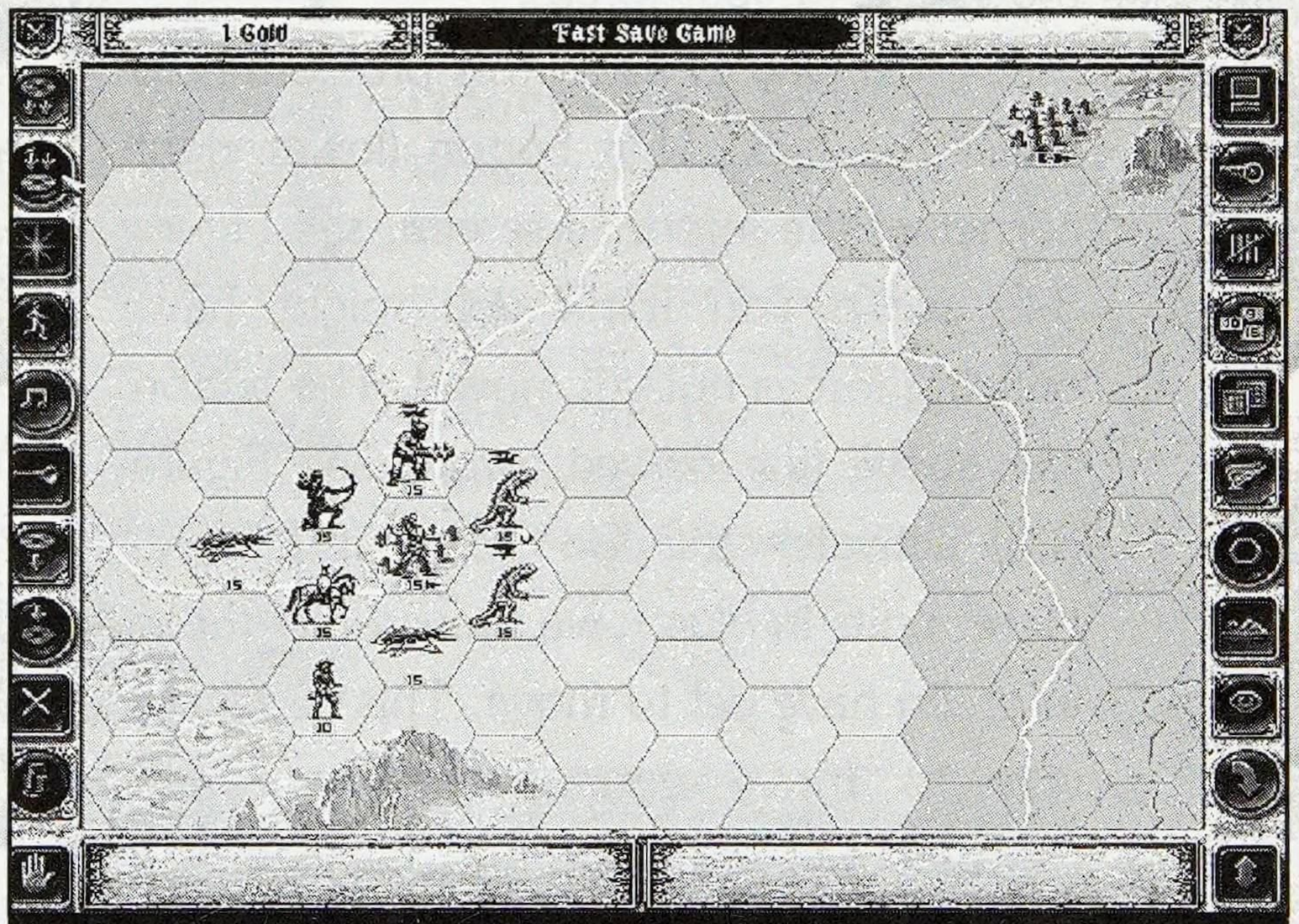
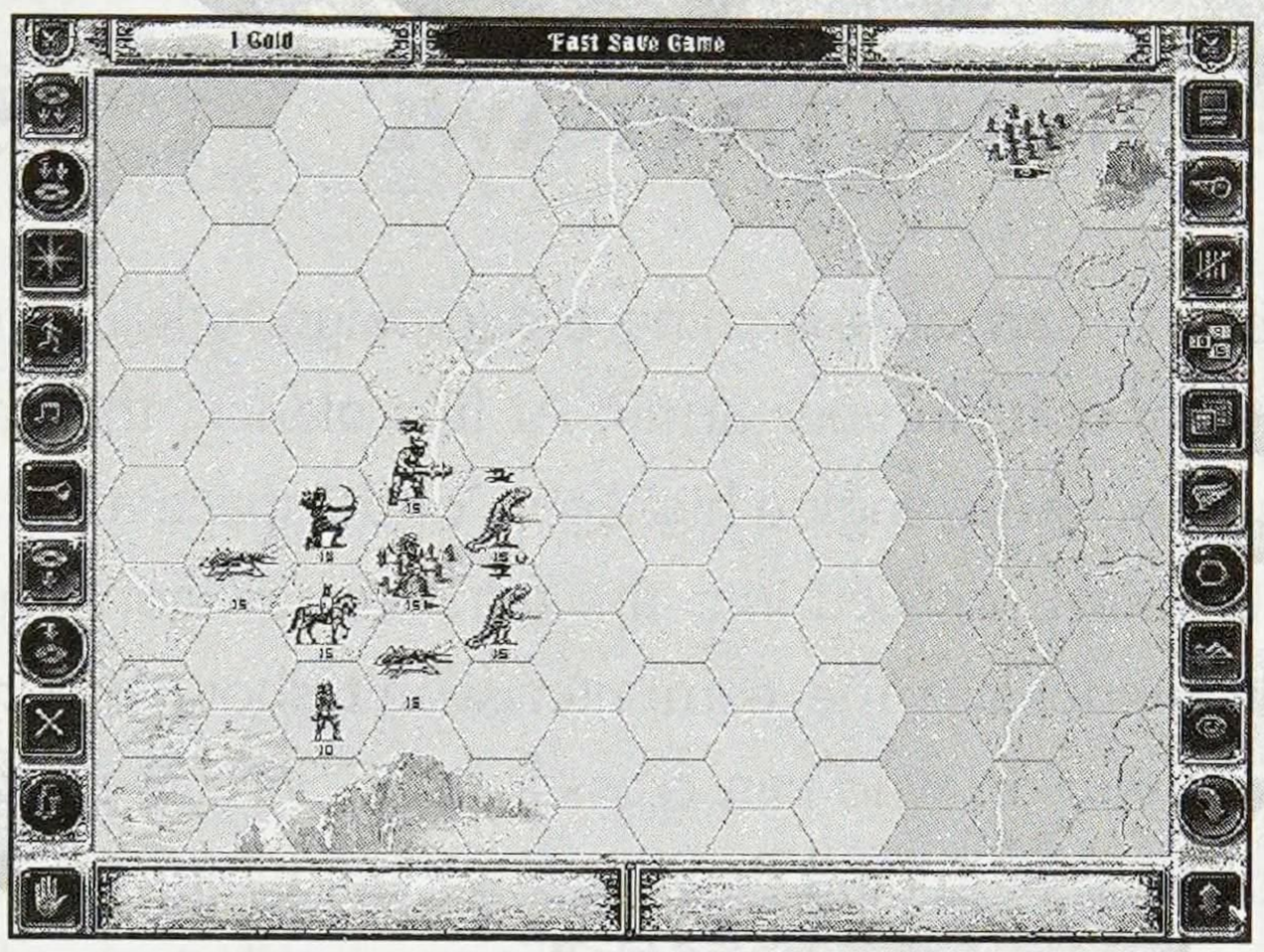


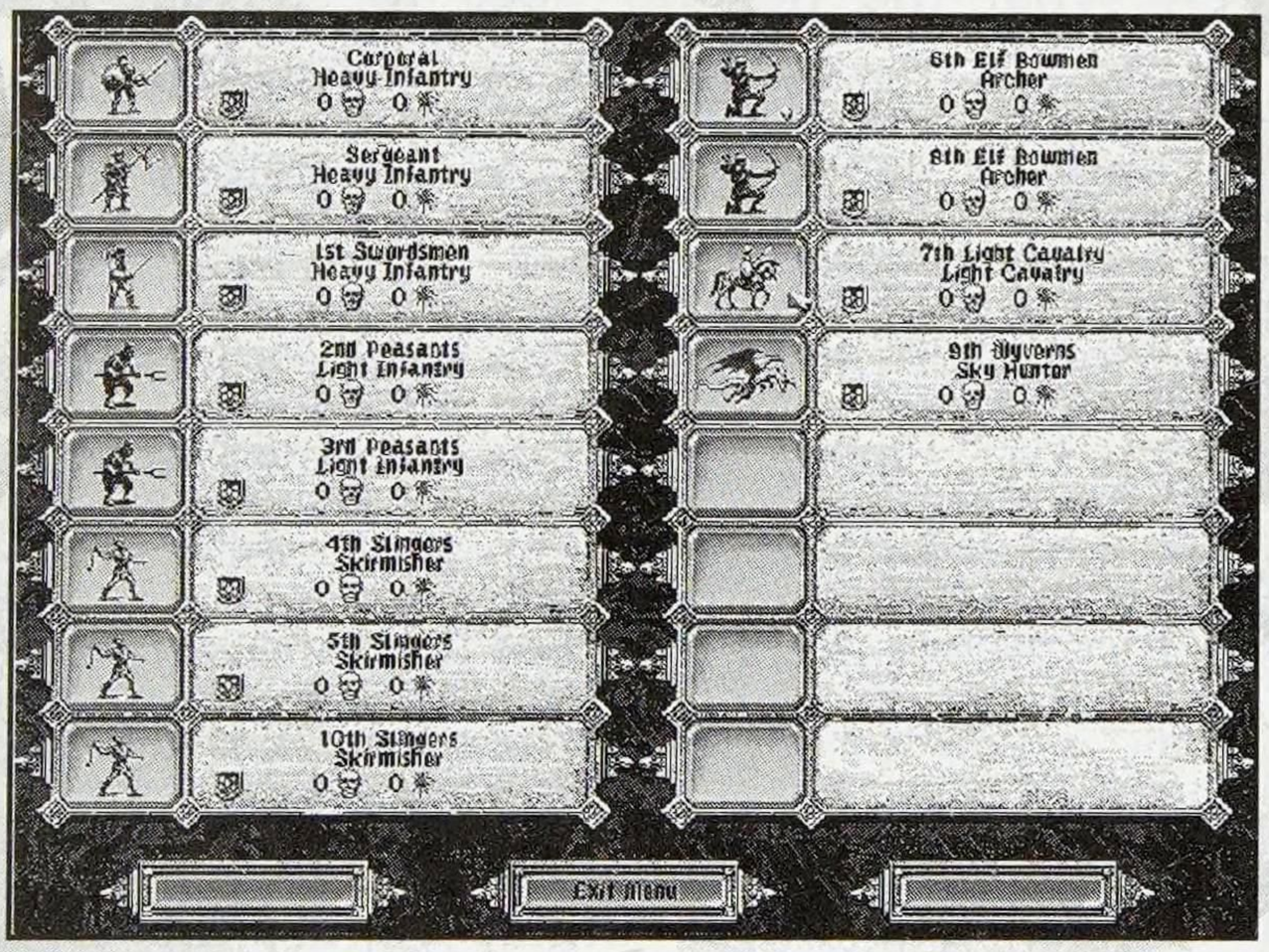
FIGURE 3-1.
The Fantasy General interface: note the Fast Save and Fast Load icons in the upper left corner, the End Turn in the lower left, and the Next Unit and Go To Unit icons in the lower right corner.

One protection for the user not retained from *Panzer General* is the approval to end the turn. Whether they did this to simulate the chaos inherent in war is irrelevant—you simply must be sure that when you hit the End Turn button (lower left corner of the interface screen), you really want to end your turn. The Shadowlord's minions are tough enough without you accidentally ending your turn before moving all of your forces.

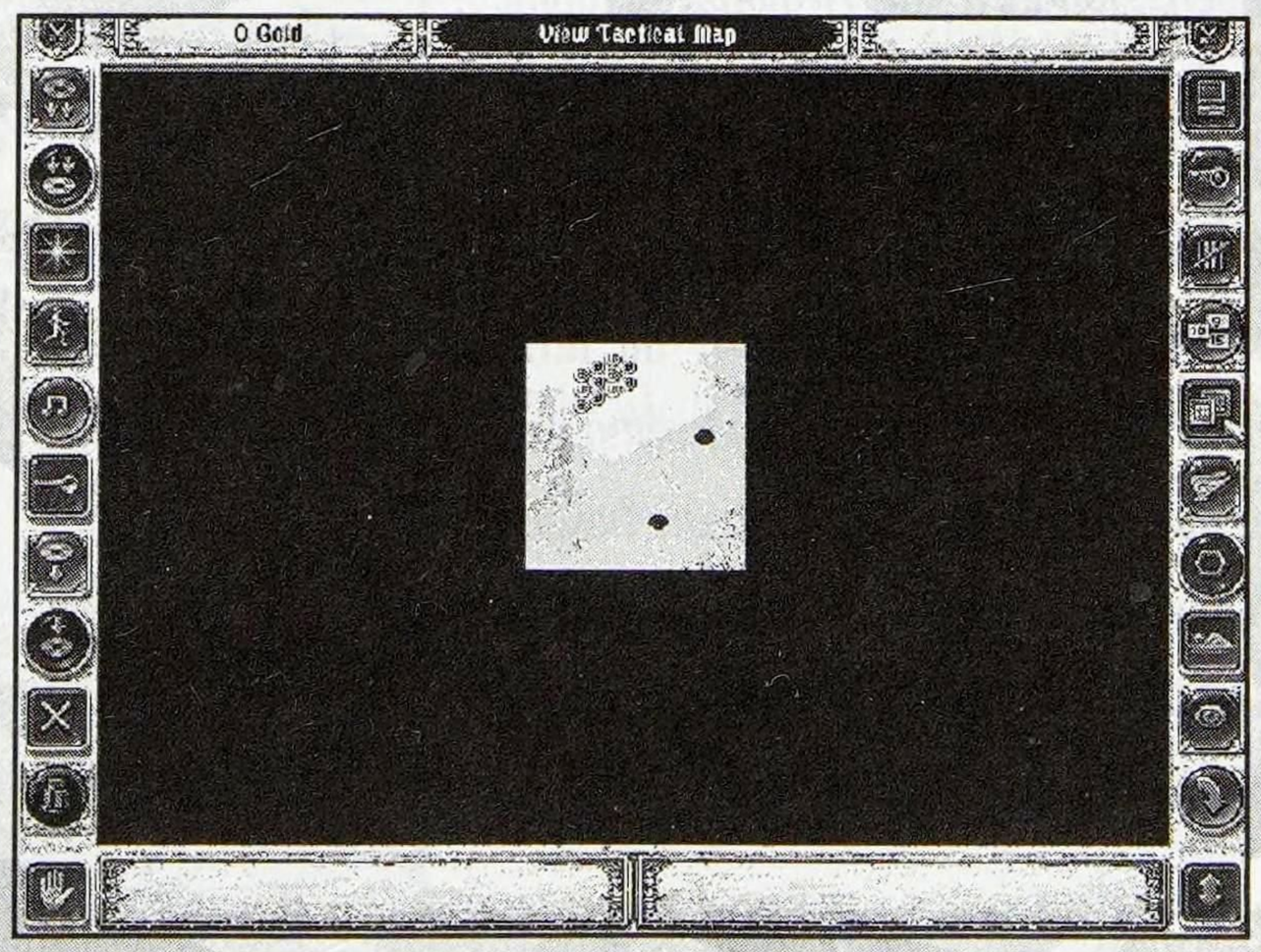
A good way to avoid this problem is to select the Next Unit button (lower right corner of the interface screen, see Figure 3-2) when you think you might have outlying forces not yet moved. The button just above (the curved arrow, see Figure 3-3) activates the Go To Unit feature. Here, units in blue have moved and those in green have yet to move. This is a good way to move your Skirmishers and Cavalry, for instance, before bringing Heavy Infantry in for the kill. Finally, you can click on the Strategic Map icon (see Figure 3-4), where the "flashing shields" may still be moved.

Another thing to be careful of is the Delete button. Should you hit this accidentally, the designers have thoughtfully left you with a "thumbs-up, thumbs-down" approval selection. If you get in such a mad clicking frenzy, though, that you inadvertently give a thumbs-up to a mistaken deletion, then you might as well recruit another unit because the deleted one is forever gone. This is another reason to save early and save often.





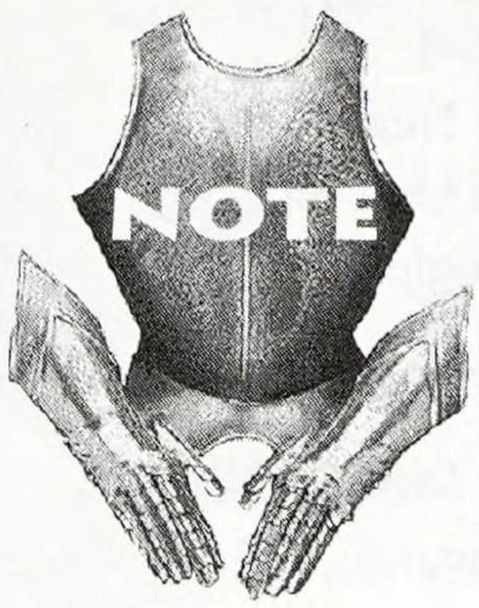
FIGURES 3-2, 3-3, 3-4. Whether you use the Next Unit (top), the Go To Unit (center), or the Strategic Map button (bottom) to reach it, this Heavy Cavalry unit is ready for some Shadow-bashing.



LEARNING TO CRAWL

The first part of beginning a campaign is knowing how to move the various types of units in your army. At first glance, this seems easy and obvious. The excellent game engine highlights every space a particular unit can move to, and all terrain is divided into the familiar hexagonal grid pattern, which regulates movement. But the computer won't show you how to clear traffic jams or advise you on who can cross a river. Sure, it makes sense that you can make good time marching down a road, but what exactly is the movement rate?

What the hexgrid does for terrain is important, since there's no question what terrain a particular hex is comprised of. Notice how the rivers and even the mountain ranges follow a predictable pattern. Flying units are exempt from terrain restrictions—they pay only one "movement point" (MP) of their movement allowance for each hex entered. (A Dragon with a movement of 5 could thus move five hexes.) All other units, regardless of whether they are Infantry or Cavalry, Magical or Mech, Good or Evil, must expend varying MPs to move into a given type of hex. For specifics, see Table 3-1.



A little history on the hexagon: while H. G. Wells may have published his "Little Wars" tabletop gaming rules around the turn of the century, commercial war/strategy gaming didn't really catch on until Charles Roberts founded the Avalon Hill game company in the 1950s. Realizing that squares were unsuitable for movement–units can move farther diagonally than laterally–Roberts came up with the "hexgrid" now common in nearly all turn-based strategy games, both board and computer-based. You have the option of turning the hexgrid outlines off, but they still exist as far as all units on the map are concerned, regulating their movement equally in all directions.

Table 3-1: Movement Point Costs

Terrain	Open	Closed	Cavalry	Siege	Air
Castle	2/3	2/3	1	2/3	1
Town	2/3	2/3	1	2/3	1
Clear	1	1	1	1	1
Rough	1	2	2	2	1
Mountain	All	All	All	All	1
Volcano	All	All	All	All	1
Swamp	3	All	All	All	1
Shrine	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	1
Woods	1	2	2	2	1
Jungle	2	3	4	All	1
Wall	2/3	2/3	1	2/3	1
River	All	All	3	All	1
Road	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	1
Bridge	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	1
Keep	2/3	2/3	1	2/3	1
Tower	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	1

In Table 3-1, "All" is exactly what it sounds like—namely, the unit may enter this hex only by expending all of its MPs for the entire turn. To be eligible for the quicker Road movement rate, the unit must move from one consecutive Road hex to another. For most units, Towns, Shrines, Keeps, Towers, Castles, and Bridges are essentially the same as Roads—although Cavalry units seem to have slightly more difficulty with these terrain types, expending a full MP instead of two-thirds of one per hex.

Open-mode movement is used by all Light Infantry, Skirmishers, and Spell-casters, as well as some lower-grade Archers, such as Elf Archers, and some

Heavy Infantry—most notably Warbands, Swordsmen, and Samurai. What this simulates is the flexibility of loose formations, the hallmark of Light Infantry and Skirmishers in particular. Single heroes, such as the Sergeant, also move at Open rates.

Closed movement is used by most Heavy Infantry formations, along with any other unit that employs mass force, such as Royal Archers, Ogre Knights, or Pistoliers. For an illustration of how Open and Closed formation movement differs, see Figures 3-5 and 3-6 below.

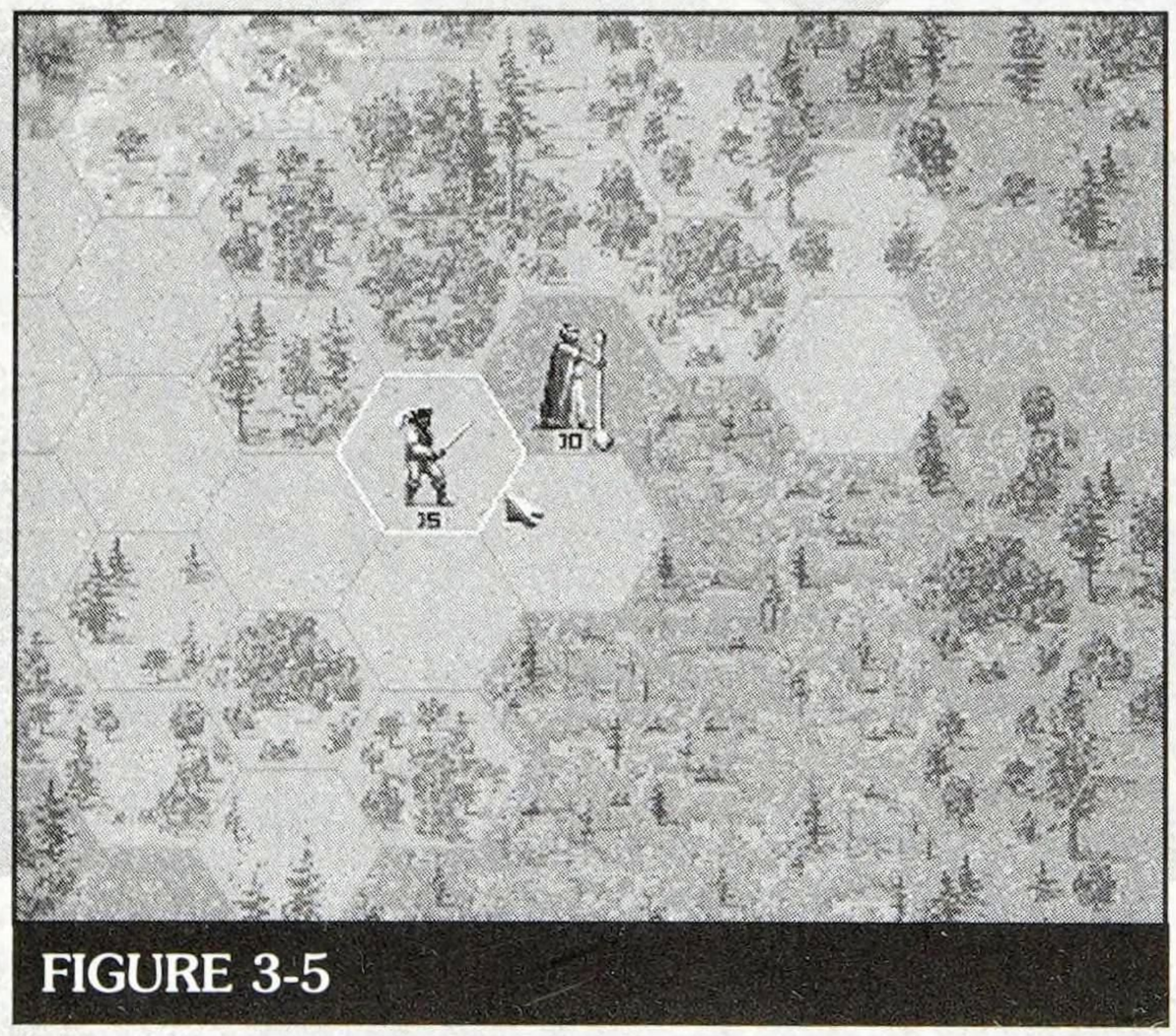


FIGURE 3-5

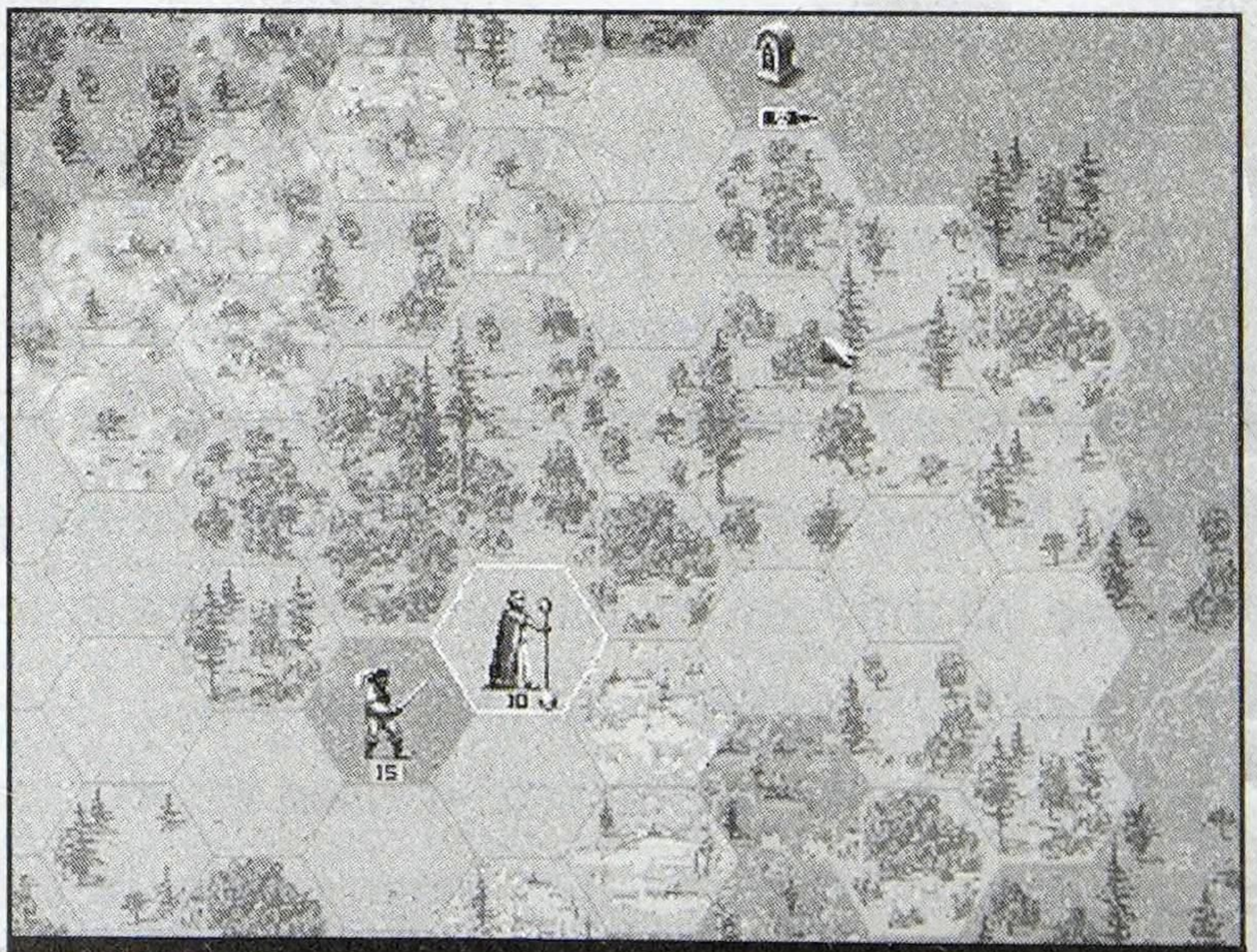
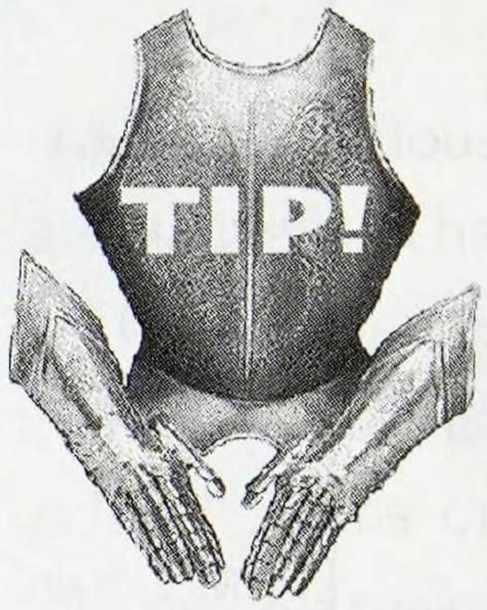


FIGURE 3-6

FIGURES 3-5 AND 3-6. Although much weaker than the Heavy Infantry, note how much more quickly the Light Infantry can traverse this wooded terrain.



One advantage of playing Mordra the Sorceress is that she may buy Beast units. They generally move at the better Open rate. Conversely, Mech units tend to move at the slower Closed rate.

Cavalry movement includes all Light and Heavy Cavalry, along with mounted Skirmishers like Wolf Riders.

Siege movement is used by those ungainly platforms that constitute medieval/fantasy artillery. Your best bet is to keep these confined to Road and Clear terrain, lest the remainder of your army leave them behind.

Air movement is used by all Sky Hunters and Bombardiers.

If you still have questions about the movement used by a specific unit, check the unit descriptions in Chapter 6.

Mobility is a key, provided that you have maneuvering room for all your forces. A typical mistake is shown in Figure 3-7, where the haste to get Cavalry into advanced recon positions puts them in jeopardy, with no support from the Archers. Also note the traffic jam that prevents the Infantry and Skirmishers from moving their full MP allowance down the road. Figure 3-8 (see page 24) shows a much more balanced, if less aggressive, deployment.

FIGURE 3-7.
The Cavalry is too far ahead, and the Skirmishers are too far back to scout properly.

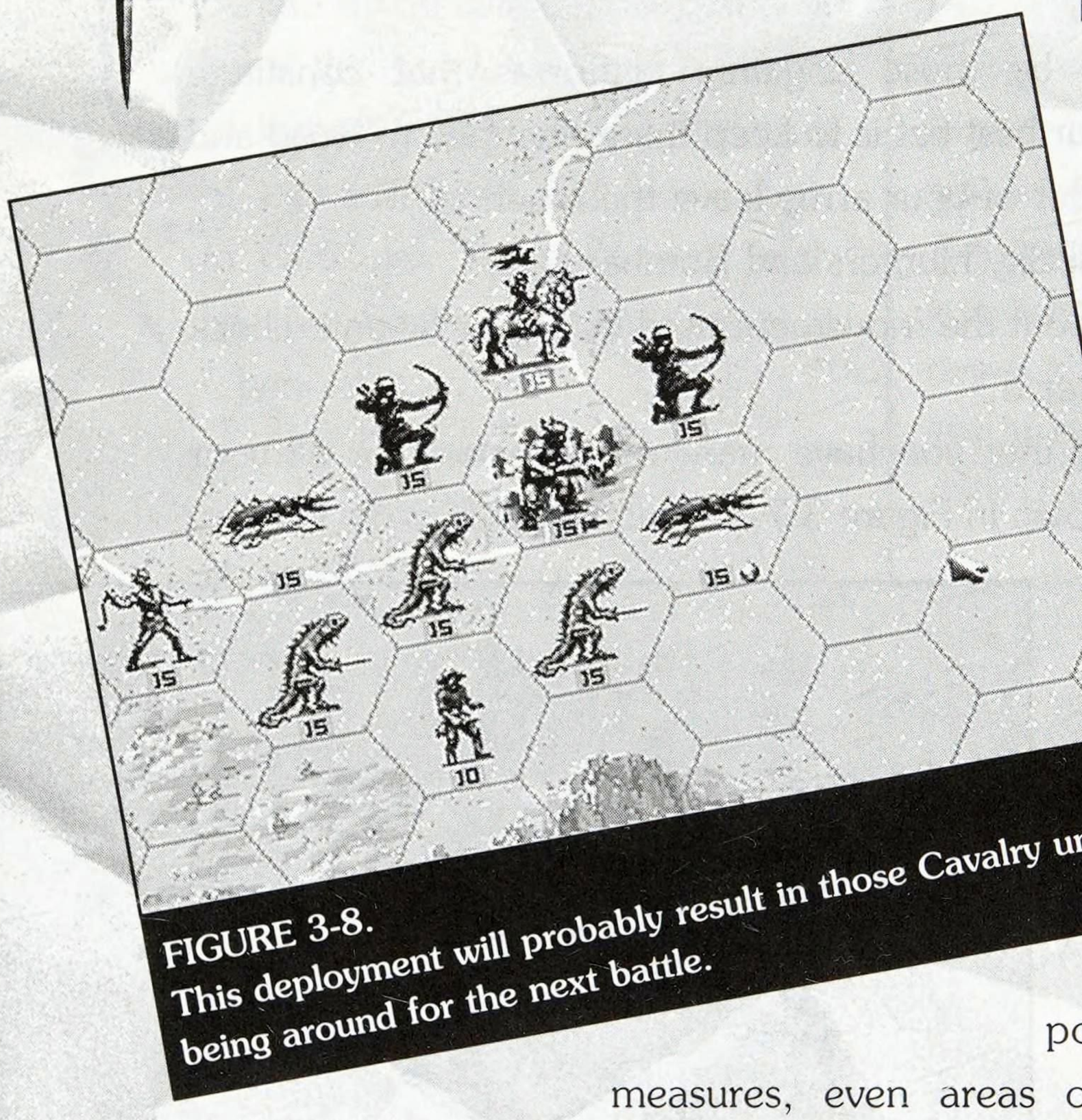
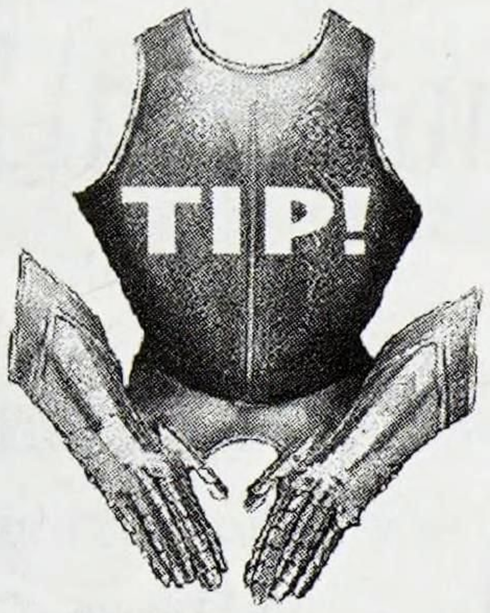


FIGURE 3-8.
This deployment will probably result in those Cavalry units being around for the next battle.

LOCKED IN A ZOC

A "Zone of Control," or ZOC, is a familiar term to many veteran wargamers. But if you ask ten gamers what one is, you are likely to get several different answers. In some modern-era wargames, for example, a ZOC is roughly equivalent to "Field of Fire." Then again, it can refer to reaction radius, skirmish range, defensive position, electronic countermeasures, even areas of political control in games covering insurgencies. All of which is fine, but thankfully, *Fantasy General* uses the term in its simplest sense.

In *Fantasy General*, a ZOC is an area that the enemy controls by means of close-range Melee, Skirmish, Siege, or Missile fire, such that your troops must stop upon entering the hex. ZOCs extend into all hexsides surrounding a unit. Units may move from one ZOC to another, but they must stop when they enter another enemy ZOC. The idea is that you couldn't simply stroll by a group of Undead Cavalry or Orcs without them attempting to restrict your movement, either by fighting or other means. On your turn, you have the choice of whether to initiate battle when in an enemy ZOC.



Even though Air units are expensive, it's always good to have at least one Sky Hunter. Since Air units ignore all ZOCs except those of other Air units, they can slip behind the lines to destroy and harass damaged enemy units–and to deny the Shadowlord a chance to do the same to your recovering units.

Figure 3-9 below shows the ZOC of a typical Infantry unit. In the Chapter 5, we'll see how ZOCs can help to maintain a defensive line, how to employ Light Cavalry as a screen, and how ZOCs help to keep retreating enemy units hemmed in. You'll also find out how your maximum army size is the single most important factor in determining what manner you conduct your campaign. Onward, ho!

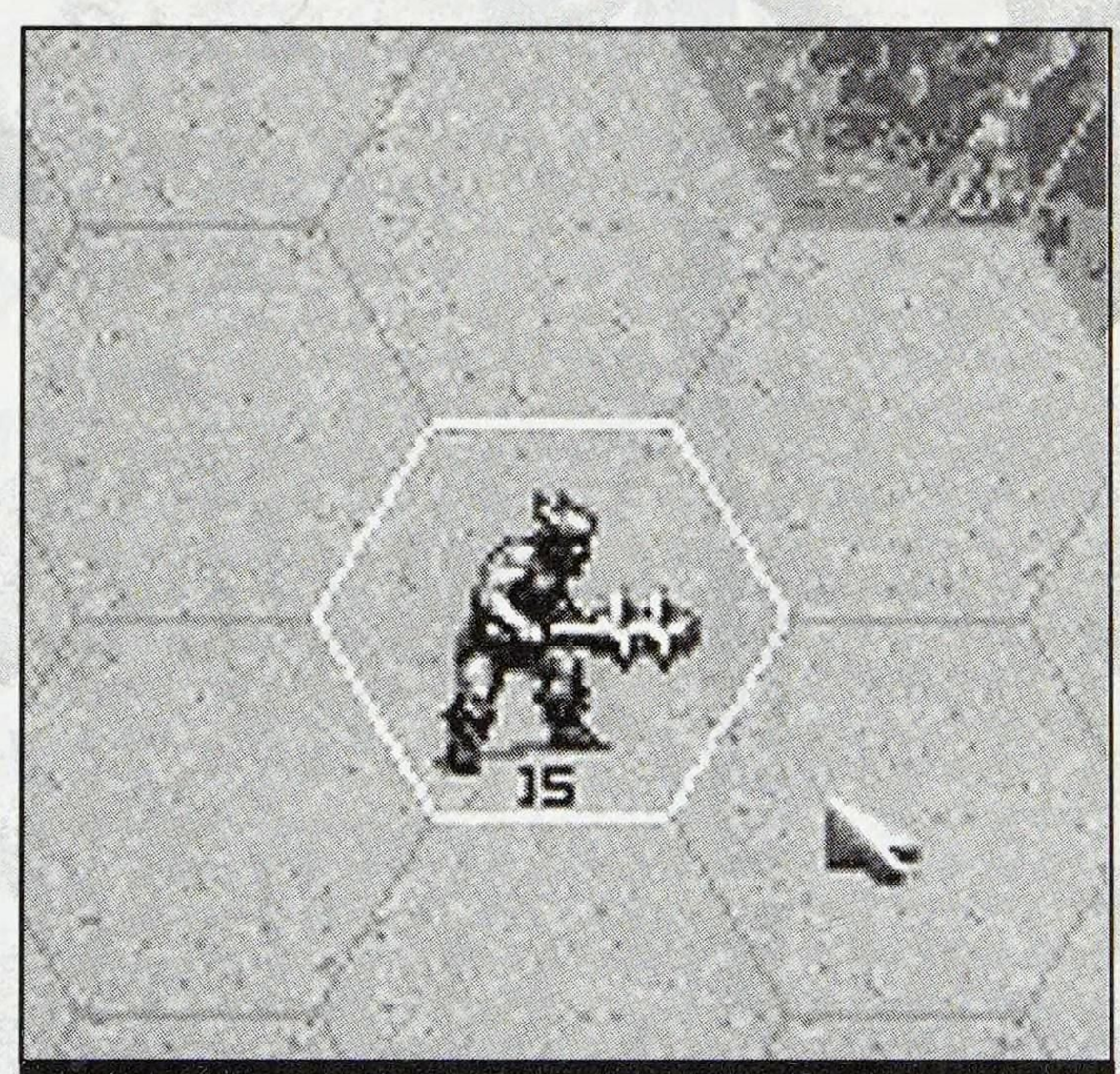


FIGURE 3-9.
This ground unit's ZOC covers all six adjacent hexes, but has no effect on Air units.

CHAPTER 4

The Clash of Swords and Shields

Understanding Combat Mechanics

The art of war is a long-studied, if hardly exact, science. And you can't help but wonder what warfare's most brilliant theorists would have made of *Fantasy General*. How, for instance, would Sun Tzu's maxim of making the enemy fight on your terms work against enemies who are not even human? And what of Clausewitz's famous quote, "War is the continuation of policy unattainable by peaceful means." Is this even applicable versus the Shadowlord, obsessed as he is with the unnatural domination of the world through magical and other means? I suspect that even Alexander the Great's famous Companions might have hesitated before charging against Werebears and Undead Cavalry.

FUN GENERAL

Fantasy General, then, is a blend of the familiar and the fantastic. In fact, SSI's entire line of *General* games blends history and fun, and every time realism and fun clash, fun wins out. This is, of course, less of a compromise in a fantasy strategy game than in a historical simulation. Still, *Fantasy General* must make sense, and react consistently, on its own terms. There must be a high degree of "perceived realism" in any fictional world. For instance, in *Star Wars*, if Darth Vader suddenly started handing out lollipops, it wouldn't make sense, and it would destroy the credibility of the fictional universe.

Thankfully, *Fantasy General* has a strong and consistent storyline, one that makes it more than a collection of unrelated battles. Similar to *Panzer General*, you role-play a particular character (the One True Champion of Aer instead of Rommel or Guderian) in your struggle against the evil of the

Shadowlord. This concept extends even to the units themselves. If you look at Marshal Calis's army at the start of the campaign, you'll notice that one unit—the Heavy Cavalry—is stronger than the others. You are likely to take greater care of this unit, using it for those critical engagements. You might even rename the unit to, say, "Shadowlord's Bane" or "Horsemen of the Apocalypse" (see Figure 4-1). Your important core units will take on lives of their own; some may even last long enough to become formations of legend, like Napoleon's Old Guard—a subtle way of bringing you deeper into the game.

The storyline goes far beyond the bare bones of the "Good versus Evil" struggle. SSI Senior Scripter Chris Carr has not only linked the various scenarios into a cohesive whole, he has also given insight into the various characters you portray. Only Lord Marcas seems typecast, though perhaps it makes sense that the strongest character in the game would be the Fantasy Hero.

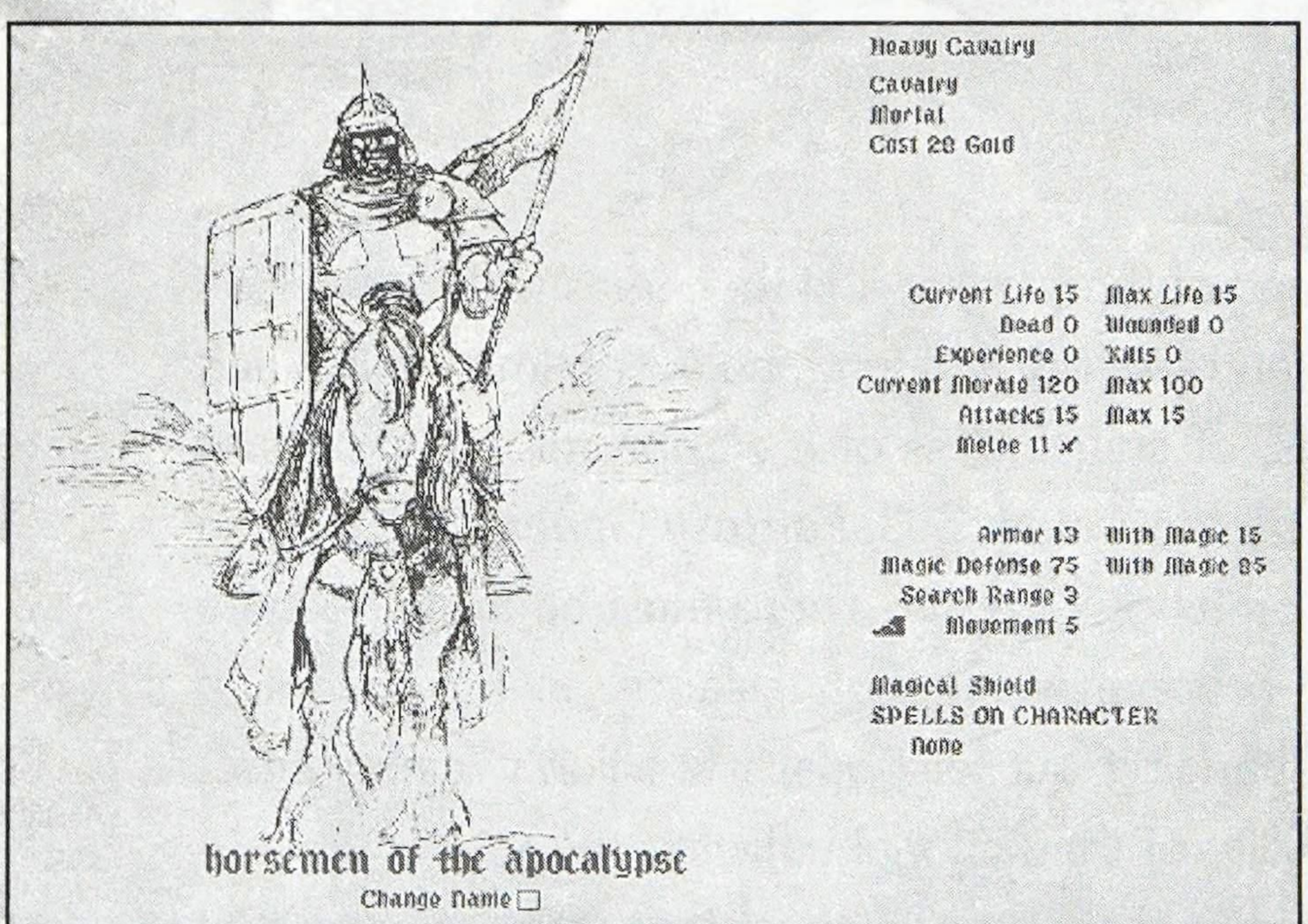


FIGURE 4-1.
Eat your heart out, Churchill Downs. Renaming units takes just a couple of mouse clicks, and it adds a lot to the flavor of the game.

Other characters are more fleshed-out. Mordra had no formal training in the arts of Conjuring, but had to use her innate abilities to survive in a harsh environment. It makes sense, then, that she has a limited, but effective, spell repertoire. We learn of Calis's captivity at the hands of the Shadowlord's lieutenant, the Orc King Dragga, and the hardships he endured. Suddenly, it's

easier to understand how a man of such internal fortitude could inspire others in battle—hence the 20 percent Morale increase for all of the Lord Marshal's forces.

As one of those responsible for bringing magic into the Age of Awakening, Krell feels it is his duty to combat the Shadowlord. The Archmage, though compelled by this strange sense of duty, is a hard character to pin down, for he seems detached, even cold. For all his immense knowledge of spellcraft and other arcane lore, Krell lacks charisma, so that all forces under his command suffer minus 20 percent to their Morale rating. His isolation from humanity manifests itself in his aversion to leading Mortal troops into battle. On the other hand, the magical units Krell conjures are resistant to the magic of the Shadowlord's minions.

The vitality of these characters, and their widely differing abilities, allow for a very replayable game, as you try new tactics against an enemy who responds to your every move. With that in mind, let's take a look at the computer opponent you face.

SILICON FANTASY WARRIOR

AI, or Artificial Intelligence, is a much-abused term. In the gaming world, it usually refers to computer programming that simulates a sentient, intelligent opponent, one that is theoretically capable of giving a human player a good fight. So far, the only real AI routines that have been able to stand up to superior human play are the best chess algorithms. These programs search through millions, even billions, of possible outcomes for each move in less than a second. These chess programs can also review, in seconds, every significant chess game by every human Grandmaster over the past four hundred years. However, despite what seems an overwhelming advantage, even the best computer chess AI has recently been beaten. Just as this book was going to

press, the highly touted chess AI Deep Blue lost a chess match decisively, four games to two, against human world chess champion Garry Kasparov.

And a chess game is relatively simple compared to the number of possible moves available on the much larger game boards of wargame simulations. So should veteran gamers simply throw up their virtual hands and despair that no AI will ever be able to give them a good struggle? The answer is no, because while a purely dominant AI doesn't yet exist, it is still possible to have a good computer opponent—and *Fantasy General* achieves this as well as or better than any other strategy game on the market.

So if the computer can't beat you in a fair fight, will it cheat? In fact, they usually do, and I have yet to play a strategy game that can't be accused of cheating in some manner or another. But *Fantasy General* is more "ethical" than most. It at least doesn't have *transparent* cheats. That is, if you are playing with the Hidden Unit option, the computer really can't see where your units are. The computer also has to live with the random factors, just as you do. The most significant "cheat" in the game occurs when you research new units—see Chapter 6—something I strongly believe enhances the game, rather than detracting from it. In all other respects, *Fantasy General* plays fair—unlike many strategy games (where designers often use cheats as a crutch), *Fantasy General* has a sound, challenging AI.

CHAOS RULES

Part of what works in *Fantasy General*'s favor is chaos theory—the forces of Chance, if you will—where random factors, based on certain percentages, affect the outcome of battles and special events, much as random "die rolls" would in a board game. Therefore, in a typical assault on a particular defensive position, there are a number of different possible outcomes:

- *The attacker could entirely eliminate the defending unit.*
- *The defender could take heavy losses but survive by retreating, living to fight another day.*
- *The defender could take some losses, but retain possession of the hex.*
- *Both the attacker and the defender could take losses, and the defender may retreat.*
- *The attack could be so ill-conceived (or unlucky) that the attackers are eliminated, regardless of defender losses.*
- *In rare cases, there may be little or no effect on the attacking or defending units.*

Randomization, then, creates an air of uncertainty around all but the most unbalanced battles. Unlike a "pure" strategy game such as chess or checkers, there is no way to absolutely predict how a given attack will turn out. Ironically, this helps the computer play a better game because there is no single "best move"–just a series of multilayered and graded probabilities. Crunching numbers and evaluating probable outcomes is something your computer opponent in *Fantasy General* does very well.

SETTING THE GAME'S LEVEL

When you begin the campaign, you must choose the level of your computer-based competition.

EASY

Easy is recommended only for those new to strategy gaming. Although the designers insist that the only major differences between the AI levels are the

resources available to the computer, there's little question this level just isn't tough enough for veteran gamers. The computer has 66 percent less gold with which to purchase units than it does at Medium level. When you begin a scenario, the computer's new units have 2 levels less experience than at Medium.

MEDIUM

Medium is the baseline for the computer. It features a nimble AI, capable of adjusting to your tactics better than the computer opponents typical of most strategy games. To give but one example: On the third continent, the Kingdom of Avernion, I assaulted the Shadowlord's troops in the Blackmoon Fens, first with Krell, then Mordra, and then Marshal Calis. My computer opponent—representing Ssazikar the Snake at this point in the game—tried to counter-punch with Krell. But against Mordra, the serpent's Beast units slugged it out toe-to-toe with those of my own; then they fell back with delaying tactics versus the Knight Marshal's Cavalry units. Pretty good stuff, coming from a computer chip.

HARD

Hard is exactly that: Medium AI on steroids. Again, the designers insist that the AI is no more aggressive or capable here than on Medium level: Don't believe it. The computer has plenty of resources available here, which frees the AI to either take more chances or to lock its position up with high-armor, high-value units if necessary. The computer has 200 percent more gold than at Medium, and the units you face are generally 2 experience levels greater. Don't expect to win against the ruthless AI on this level until you master a variety of tactics.

CUSTOM

Custom allows you to mix and match the above. Essentially, you may set the AI at any of five levels for both gold and experience. Let's say you are playing the Warlord, and you no longer find the computer challenging enough on Medium, but you are unsure of taking the computer on at Hard level. An easy solution would be to leave the gold setting at the default (Medium), but give the computer units 1 additional experience level per scenario. However, know that changes cannot be made during a campaign. For easy reference, see Table 4-1 below.

Table 4-1: AI Settings

Level	Gold	Experience	Notes
Easy	66% less than Medium	2 less per unit	Lowest Custom setting
Below Average	33% less than Medium	1 less per unit	Custom only
Medium	standard	standard	Average Custom setting
Above Average	50% more than Medium	1 more per unit	Custom only
Hard	200% more than Medium	2 more per unit	Highest Custom setting

Keep in mind that the AI plays a very good game on Medium and that the Hard settings are as good a challenge as you are likely to find on a computer. The Below Average setting is my recommendation for players unfamiliar with strategy wargames, simply because it pushes you a little (see also Figure 4-2).

WHAT COMBAT RESULTS REALLY MEAN

Whenever two units engage in combat, the computer calculates and then displays the results. It shows the number of kills and wounds each unit received,

and it also calculates the number of suppressions, though these aren't displayed. Suppressions are related to morale, and all of these terms are explained below.

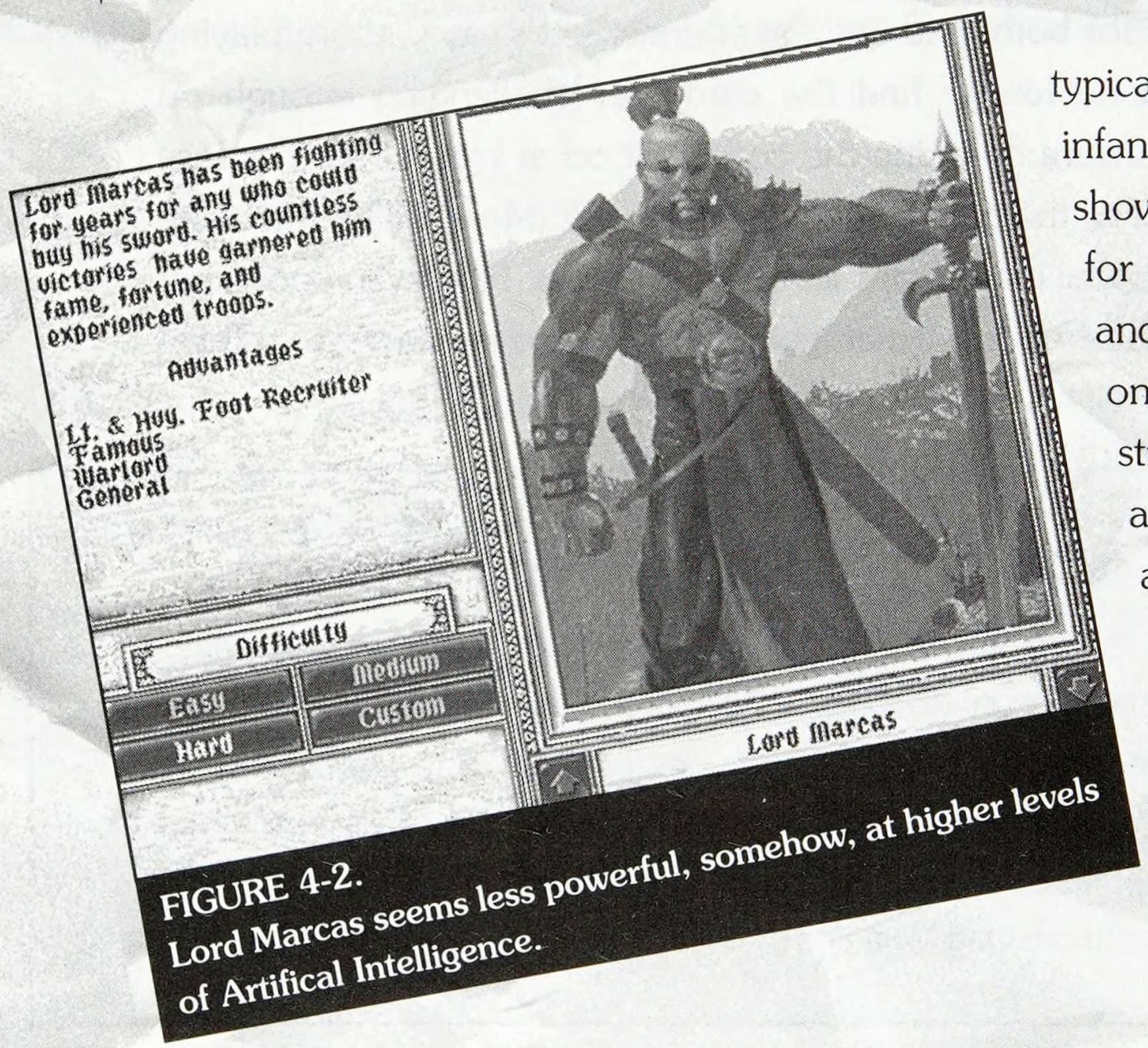


FIGURE 4-2.
Lord Marcas seems less powerful, somehow, at higher levels of Artifical Intelligence.

Figure 4-3 shows a typical combat between two infantry units. The numbers shown are expected losses for both the attacker (you) and the defender, based on the Melee and Armor strengths of each. This anticipated loss assumes average "die rolls," and these results can vary greatly, especially when units of high Melee and/ or relatively low Armor strength meet.

WOUNDS

Wounds are temporary losses representing not only wounded combatants but any troops in that formation unable to perform at full strength. Purists should note that this would include stragglers, malcontents, lazy Orcs, and whatnot, obviating any need for specific complex rules to cover those incidents. Wounds may be healed by selecting the Rest button (upper left of the main interface screen). However, you may only heal all of your Wounds if you are out of an enemy ZOC; units resting in an enemy ZOC heal just 1 Wound point.

KILLS

Kills are pretty much what they sound like. These losses are permanent for the duration of the current scenario. Kills may be replaced in a Town or Keep, but it costs gold to replace each point, based on the purchase cost of the unit. Kills, like Wounds, are automatically replaced at the end of each scenario you win in the campaign, albeit at lesser experience (see the section "Nothing Replaces Experience" below).

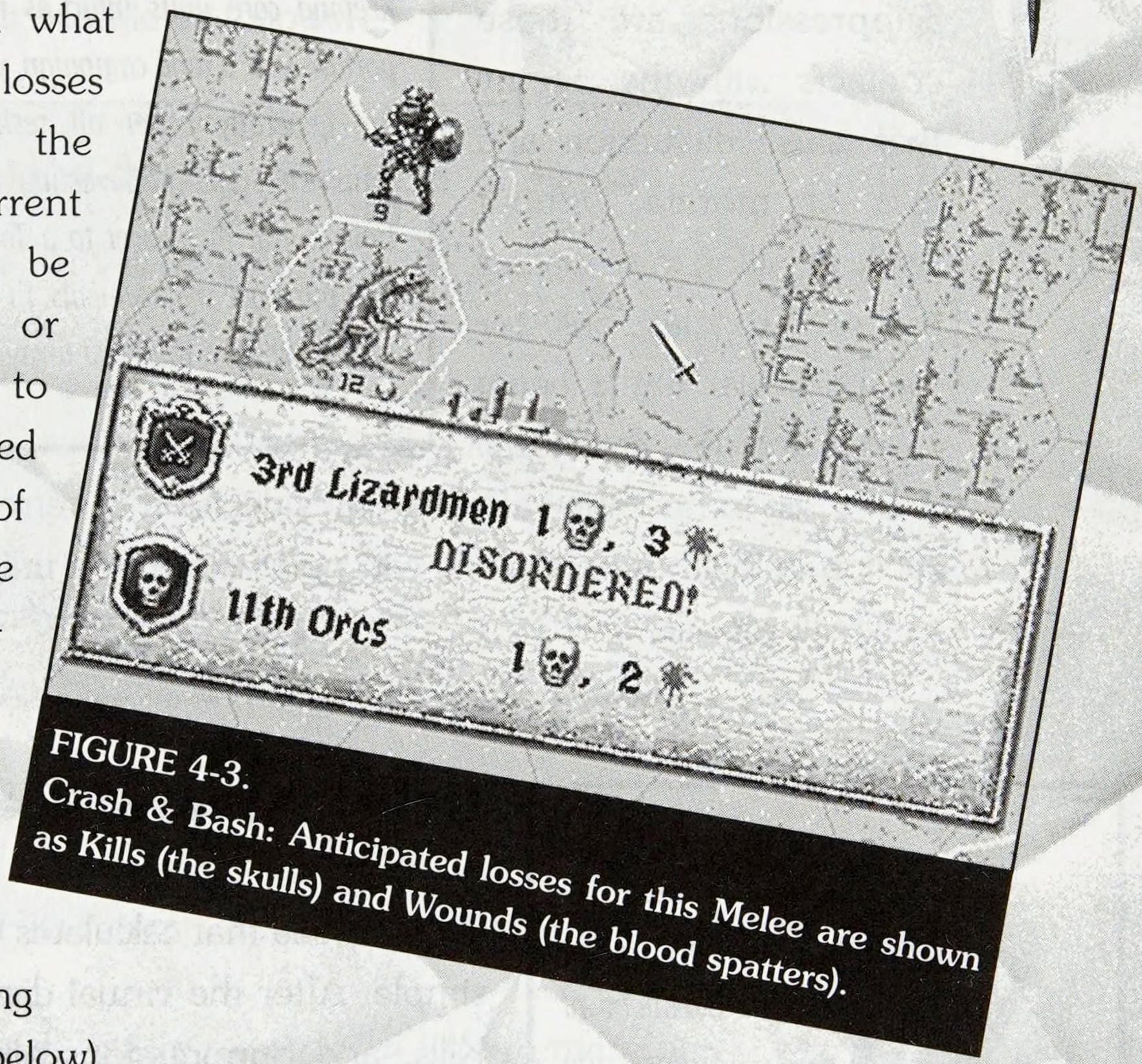
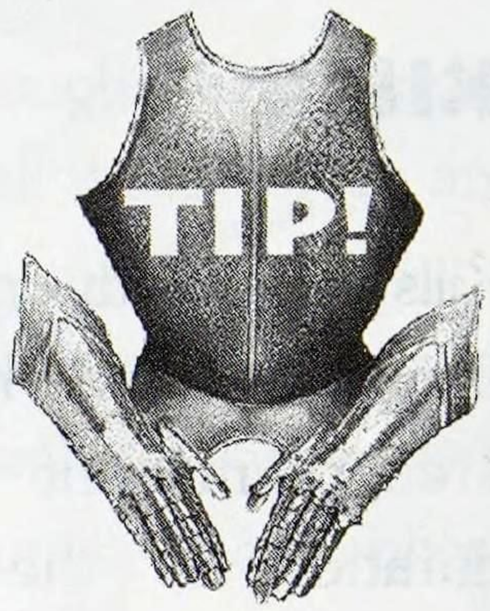


FIGURE 4-3.
Crash & Bash: Anticipated losses for this Melee are shown as Kills (the skulls) and Wounds (the blood spatters).

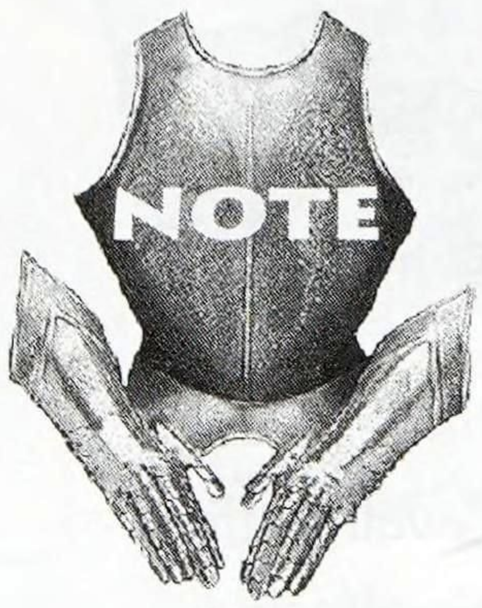
The effective strength of a fighting unit is equal to its starting Life (either 10 or 15) minus any Wounds and Kills it receives. So, if a Heavy Cavalry unit had 3 Kills and 4 Wounds inflicted upon it after an attack, the unit's effective strength would be 15 - 3 - 4 = 8. While the Cavalry could rest and get the 4 Wounds back, it couldn't get the Kills back without purchasing replacements at a Town.

SUPPRESSIONS

Suppressions are those contacts with the enemy that cause disruption and loss of morale without really resulting in casualties *per se*. They last only for the particular battle being fought, and they are mostly of interest in how they affect a unit's decision to retreat (see the "Run Away!" section below). Suppressions can *never* destroy a unit, although they do tend to wreck Morale.



Generally, you need mobility to achieve your objectives. While keeping core units intact is important over a long campaign, you are generally better off resting units than you are wasting the time to run them over to a Town and purchase replacements. In those rare cases where the Town is on your way, then rest away and thank your good fortune.



Because you can't see the likelihood of Suppression hits, unlike potential Wounds and Kills, a good rule of thumb is that when a unit takes around 45 to 50 percent casualties, it will almost certainly retreat. Plan attacks and defenses with this in mind.

RUN AWAY!

The formula that calculates when a unit will retreat is simple. After the virtual dice are rolled, all Wounds, Kills, and Suppressions are collectively tallied and called Hits. The total number of Hits is then compared to the total Life remaining after the Wounds and Kills have been subtracted. If the Hits are higher, then the unit retreats. If, in our example above, the Heavy Cavalry took 2 or more Suppression hits, it would be forced to retreat:

4 Wounds + 3 Kills + 2 Suppression = 9

9 total Hits > 8 Life, therefore unit retreats.

In addition to any damage or retreat inflicted during combat, Hits also cause deleterious effects to Morale. The majority of units start with a Morale of 100, and suffer losses to their Morale as follows:

Table 4-2: Morale Ebb & Flow

Each Kill suffered: -5 Morale
Each Wound suffered: -3 Morale
Each Suppression: -1 Morale
Any unit led by Marshal Calis: +20 Morale
Any unit led by Archmage Krell: -20 Morale
Blessing Spell: +10 Morale
For every Hero your unit is next to: +10 Morale

THE LAWS OF RETREAT

A unit that has suffered Hits retreats under the following circumstances:

- *Total of Kills + Wounds + Suppressions > Life Remaining.*
- *A Broken unit* always retreats.
- *A unit retreats when it fails a Magic Resistance die-roll versus Banshee Spell.*
- *Units defending in a Castle, Keep, or Tower* never retreat.

RETREAT PRIORITIES

When retreating due to combat or magic results, a unit attempts one of the following actions:

- *Retreat* directly away *from the enemy.*
- *Retreat diagonally, but not into an enemy ZOC.*
- *Retreat diagonally backward, but only if the ZOC is okay.*
- *Retreat to any adjacent hex, if none of the above are available.*

FIGURE 4-4.
This tough enemy unit has been "softened up" by Archers and Skirmishers. Now surrounded, it will almost certainly surrender when attacked by the Barbarian.

If it can't legally perform the first retreat (say, another unit is already there), the unit will try the second option, and so on, until it runs out of options. If a unit cannot legally retreat, it *surrenders,* as in Figure 4-4.

NOTHING REPLACES EXPERIENCE

If you wondered what the manual meant by higher Experience levels giving a unit "An increase in the unit's base morale which increases over time," and "An increased ability to resist retreat results," don't worry. All this is true, as far as it goes. You see, the designers assume that if your troops can get through the first, and successive continents, then those units will be battle-hardened veterans by the time they reach Fire Isle—although surviving that long is obviously easier said than done. Thus, for every level of experience a unit gains, they receive the advantages shown below.

For each level of experience:
+5 Morale
+2 Armor (except Siege units)
+2 to primary combat (on attack and defense)
+1 Melee (if not primary attack)

It's easy to see, then, that even low-grade units like Elf Archers become an effective force if they survive long enough to gain experience of level 4 or 5.

HOW COMBAT REALLY WORKS

Those of you who feel that your strategy diet is incomplete without numbers and formulas should relish this section. And even those of you who don't mutter combat modifiers in your sleep might want to stick around, since this information will be critical when you need to decide which units to purchase. So, if you feel a little overwhelmed, just keep telling yourself that all will become clear in the next chapters on tactics and research—I swear by the Shrine of Hespae.

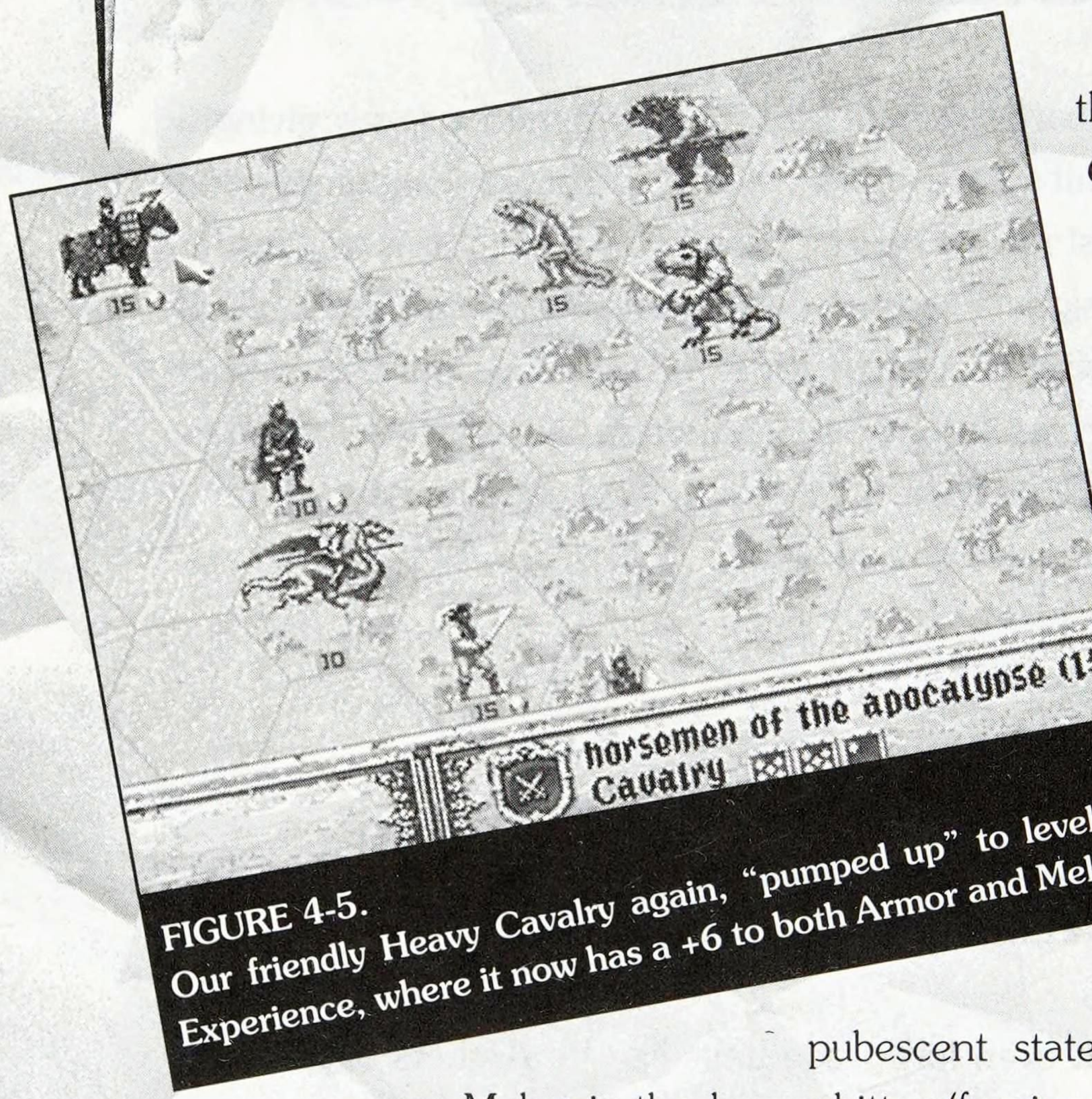


FIGURE 4-5.
Our friendly Heavy Cavalry again, "pumped up" to level 3 Experience, where it now has a +6 to both Armor and Melee.

Anyone who has played the other games in SSI's *General* line understands the "rock-paper-scissors" nature of the combat system, where armor defeats infantry, infantry defeats anti-tank guns, and so on. The medieval and mystical world of *Fantasy General* uses a similar approach but layers additional elements into the recipe. Gunpowder is in a pre-pubescent state of development, so that Melee is the heavy hitter (forgive the pun) of the battlefield. Ranged combat seems familiar enough, as it is vulnerable to Melee, but it can support friendly units from behind the line. But where do these Skirmishers fit in?

Basically, when one unit attacks another, the battle occurs in four distinct stages.

- *Units fight with any Missile rating.*
- *Any Archers supporting a defending unit get a free Missile shot.*
- *Units fight with any Skirmish rating.*
- *Units fight with any Melee rating.*

This simulates the battle from long-range (Missile) to medium-range (Skirmish) to short-range (Melee). As each round of combat is conducted, fighting is simultaneous, and any losses are suffered immediately. So, if one Archer attacked another, both would fire simultaneously in the Missile round, and on to Melee. On the other hand, if a Heavy Infantry unit attacked an Archer, the foot-sloggers would have to literally suffer arrows until they closed to short range (at which time the Archer is likely going to suffer greatly for having made these powerful Melee units angry).

As we've already seen, units take Hits from combat *as each round occurs*; but only if the enemy has a rating that matches the round–for example, a skirmish rating in the skirmish round. Therefore, a unit must check its Morale *each and every* time it takes a Hit—even on "mere" Suppression results. Essentially, this is a percentage die-roll. Simply put, if your unit rolls greater than its current Morale, it is "Disordered," and receives a -2 modifier to its Armor rating and to *all combat ratings* for the remainder of this particular battle; there are no additional affects. If you *really* blow the Morale die-roll (based on 20 percent of your current Morale), your unit is "Broken," with a -5 to combat and Armor, and it will automatically retreat. Units do not recover from being Broken until they Rest.

In most cases, each Life remaining on a particular unit makes its attack. For example, most Mortal units begin with a Life of 15. Thus, an undamaged Mortal unit would make 15 die-rolls on attack or defense, while our Heavy Cavalry (after the first battle) would make eight die-rolls (15 Life - 3 Kills - 4 Wounds = 8 Life). Basically, the combat rating (Melee, Skirmish, or Missile) subtracts the Armor rating of the opposing unit to arrive at a base chance to Hit. This base chance is then subject to a bewildering number of modifiers. For example, Heavy Cavalry has a +8 versus enemy units defending in open terrain. This simulates the power of the Shock Combat of the Cavalry's charge. There are always exceptions, however; in this case, Pike units ignore the Cavalry bonus (horses don't relish being impaled on pikes). So, to sort out all

the possible permutations, refer to Table 4-3 on "Comprehensive Combat Modifiers" and Table 4-4 on "Comprehensive Armor Modifiers" (on pages 44 and 45, respectively).

Keeping in mind that there are a number of exceptions for special units and terrain, the formula for combat is computed as follows:

When Melee > Opposing Armor: Hit Chance = 25 + 3 x (Melee - Armor), where the maximum resulting number can be no greater than 85. If a Heavy Infantry of 14 Melee attacked a Light Goblin Infantry of 9 Armor, the base chance to Hit would be: 25 + 3 x (14 - 9) = 25 + (3 x 5) = 25 + 15 = 40. So, 40 is the base chance to Hit in this instance.

When Melee is *not* > Opposing Armor: Hit Chance = 25 - 2 x (Armor - Melee), where the minimum value must be at least 5. If a Light Infantry of 8 Melee attacked a Bronzeman with 14 Armor, the base chance to Hit would be: 25 - 2 x (14 - 8) = 25 - (2 x 6) = 25 - 12 = 13. So, 13 is the base chance to Hit.

The base Hit Chance (HC) is then compared to a percentage die-roll (%DR):

1. **If the %DR > HC x 2, there is no effect on the unit.**
2. **If the %DR <= HC x 2, but < 96, then the unit gets one Suppression hit.**
3. **If the %DR <= HC, then the unit receives one Wound.**
4. **If the %DR <= HC/5, then the unit receives one Kill.**

As an example: our Heavy Cavalry of 11 Melee and 13 Armor attacks Treemen of 17 Melee and 12 Armor. Assuming this fight takes place in open terrain (+8 for the Cavalry), the HC = 25 + ((11 + 8 - 12) x 3) = 25 + (7 x 3) = 46. Assume that our Heavy Cavalry has had no chance to Rest and is still at a combat strength of 8 (minus Wounds and Kills). The eight percentage die-rolls lead to the results listed on page 43.

%DR	HC Formula	Result
50	< 2 x HC	1 Suppression
5	< HC/5	1 Kill
13	< HC	1 Wound
24	< HC	1 Wound
93	> 2 x HC	No Effect
55	< 2 x HC	1 Suppression
26	< HC	1 Wound
96	96 & Higher	Always No Effect

Assessing the damage, we see that our Heavy Cavalry, aided by the charge, scored 1 Kill, 3 Wounds, and 2 Suppressions. The 6 total Hits are not more than the Treemen's remaining 11 Lives, so the only way the wooden adversaries would retreat is by blowing a Morale die-roll and breaking. In any case, because combat is simultaneous, the Cavalry must undergo 15 attacks at HC = 25.

To end this chapter, as if your head wasn't swimming with data already, we've included two exhaustive tables that list all combat and armor modifiers. For now, my best advice is to skip these tables and move on the next chapter, which contains specific advice on how to get the most out of your troops in battle. However, once you've gotten familiar with the general attributes of various units, return to these tables in order to fine-tune your strategy. To the uninitiated, these modifiers are just so many numbers, but they represent how the computer understands the actual battle skills and strengths of your troops. As any "real life" war general will tell you, knowing what, and how, your opponent thinks is crucial to winning any war.

Table 4-3: Comprehensive Combat Modifiers

Combat Type	Situation	Modifier	Versus	Terrain
Primary	Combat	+2/Exp.level	All	All
Non-Primary	Non-Class Combat	+1/Exp.level	All	All
Melee	Magic Sword	+2	All	All
Melee	Magic Axe	+3	All	All
Melee	Sky Hunter	+2	Cavalry/Lt.Cavalry	All
Melee	Berserk Spell	+5	All	All
Melee	Berserk Advantage	+3 Attack	All	All
Melee	Blood Lust	+4	All	All
Primary	Mystic	+4	All	All
Melee	Fatigue	-2	All	All
All	Disordered	-2	All	All
All	Broken	-5	All	All
Melee	Lt.Infantry	+3	All	Rugged
Skirmish	Any Skirmisher	+3	All	Rugged
Melee	Non-Skirmisher (except Lt.Infantry)	-4	Skirmisher Light	Attacking into Rugged
Melee	Defending	+2	All	Keep, Mountain, Tower, Volcano, Woods
Melee	Defending	+3	All	Castle, Jungle, Wall, Swamp, Town
Melee	Cavalry Charge	+8 Attack	All but Pike	Open
Skirmish	Magic Sling	+2	All	All
Skirmish	Magic Staff	+3	All	All
Skirmish	Magic Javelin	+4	All	All
Skirmish	Dense Foliage	-2	All	Jungle, Woods
Missile	Dense Foliage	-2	All	Jungle, Woods
Missile	Magic Bow	+2	All	All
Missile	Archer	+3	Any Air or Cavalry	All
Missile	Bombardier	+3	Any Cavalry	All
Missile	Magic Crossbow	+4	All	All
All	Friendly Support	+4	Adjacent Enemy	All
Any	Siege Support	+2 per Siege Unit	All	Castle, Keep, Tower, Town
Any	Dwarf Advantage	+3	All	Castle, Keep, Tower, Town

In Table 4-3, "Open Terrain" refers Clear, Desert, Road, and Shrine Village, but not Bridges. "Rugged Terrain" refers to Jungle, Mountain, River, Rough, Swamp, Volcano, or Woods. At the end of the table, "Friendly Support" applies if two or more of your units is adjacent to the unit you are attacking. This is similar to "Siege Support," which only applies if the Siege unit(s) are adjacent to your attacking unit.

Table 4-4: Comprehensive Armor Modifiers

Combat Type	Situation	Armor Value	Versus	Terrain
Any	Experience	+2 per level (except Siege)	All	All
Any	Magic Shield	+2	All	All
Any	Magic Armor	+3	All	All
Any	Armor Spell	+5	All	All
Any	Fatigue Spell	-2	All	All
Any	Berserk Spell	5	All	All
Any	Dwarf Advantage	+2	All	All
Any	Disordered	-2	All	All
Any	Broken	-5	All	All
Any	Berserk Advantage	-5	All	All
Any	Defending	+2	All	Rough
Any	defending	+3	All	Tower, Woods
Any	defending	+4	All	Keep, Mountain, Volcano
Any	defending	+5	All	Castle, Jungle, Swamp, Town
Cavalry	Attacking	+4	All but Pike	Open
Any	Any Skirmisher or Lt.Infantry	+2	All	Rugged
Skirmish or Lt. Cavalry	Ranged Defense	+2	Any Missile, Siege, Skirmish Attack	All
Magic Units	Vulnerability	-4	Mech	All
Mech Units	Vulnerability	-3	Magic	All

In Table 4-4, "Open" and "Rugged" refer to the same terrain as in Table 4-3, and the vulnerability rating of Magic units to Mechs applies to any unit that is vulnerable to Mechs, such as Spellcasters.

CHAPTER 5

From Slugfests to Skirmishers

Developing Tactics and Strategies

Medieval warfare, and by extension fantasy warfare, has often been pigeonholed as lacking in subtlety. There is supposedly too much "crash n' bash," too little maneuver. Certainly the technology is not as sexy as tanks with infrared sighting mechanisms, or stealth bombers, or laser cannons on starships; but the interaction between the diverse combat arms in *Fantasy General* offers more than enough variety to keep even *Panzer* freaks happy for hours and hours of challenging play. This chapter will examine the combat classes—Skirmisher, Missile, and Melee units—in detail, providing specific examples to improve your play with each class.

THOSE PESKY SKIRMISHERS

Our image of Skirmishers descends from Hollywood films, where motley bands of men, armed with all manner of odd weaponry, are driven from the battlefield by Errol Flynn's knights or somesuch. Even in reality, Skirmishers were too lightly armed to stand toe-to-toe with the more heavily armed infantry. And they did arm themselves with whatever was at hand: farmers defending their land frequently used pitchforks; local villages annually had contests to see who could hurl a javelin the farthest; for shepherds, it was no big leap to go from loosing stones at an enemy than at a wolf after their flock.

But just because the Skirmishers had makeshift weapons and little, if any, armor, doesn't mean that they were poor fighters. Because they were less concerned with vague notions of "honor," they were more likely than the

professional soldiers to use whatever tactics would gain them victory—and to run when the odds were against them, so that they might live to fight another day.

In *Fantasy General*, Skirmishers have the following advantages:

- *Generally, Skirmishers are faster than Infantry, allowing them to "hit and run," without taking too much damage.*
- *They function pretty well in rugged terrain, both in terms of less movement points per hex and in combat modifiers (see the Comprehensive Combat and Armor Tables at the end of Chapter 4).*
- *When defending versus Melee units, Skirmishers fire first.*
- *When attacking enemy Melee units, Skirmishers may fire without suffering immediate return fire.*
- *More experienced Skirmishers have a better chance of Disrupting or even Breaking the enemy, setting them up for the hammer blow.*
- *In combat, when a Skirmisher has an equal or greater movement allowance than its enemy, it has a 50 percent chance of converting any Kill or Wound result to 3 Morale losses (this would still equal 1 Hit for combat and retreat purposes).*
- *Unlike Cavalry, Skirmishers aren't sitting ducks for Sky Hunters (who seem to like the taste of horse flesh better).*

Another word for Skirmishers is "Auxiliaries," with all the ephemeral nature that word implies. To put it another way: Skirmishers are cheap. They can be used like paper plates; in a word, they are *disposable*. Callous, you say? Well, this is war, and to die an honorable death fighting the Shadowlord's evil is a *good death*.

As your army maximum increases, you may not be able to afford all the Heavy Cavalry, Werebears, or Silver Dragons you have room for. What you can do is buy some cheap Slingers and Staff Slingers, knowing that if they

don't survive the battle, you can always build some more for the next scenario. Skirmishers make decent garrisons because they can delay any Cavalry or Light Infantry that get behind your lines, keeping them from reaching your victory point hexes.

Skirmishers are decent recon units, especially once you research Scouts, which may turn *invisible*. The invisibility is actually effective, proof that the AI really can't look illegally at your hidden units. Face it: it makes a lot more sense to send in a Slinger to check out the Keep's defenses than it does to first send in your crack Barbarian hordes. Once your Skirmishers have found the enemy, they will spring into action, probably causing your Slingers to retreat. If they are chewed up badly, you will have to rest them for the next reconnoitering trip. So, you should always have at least *three* Skirmisher units at all times: one will be busy healing, one can be performing recon, and one or more can be annoying enemy units. If you are playing the Warlord, you should have at least four Skirmishers—you can easily afford them.

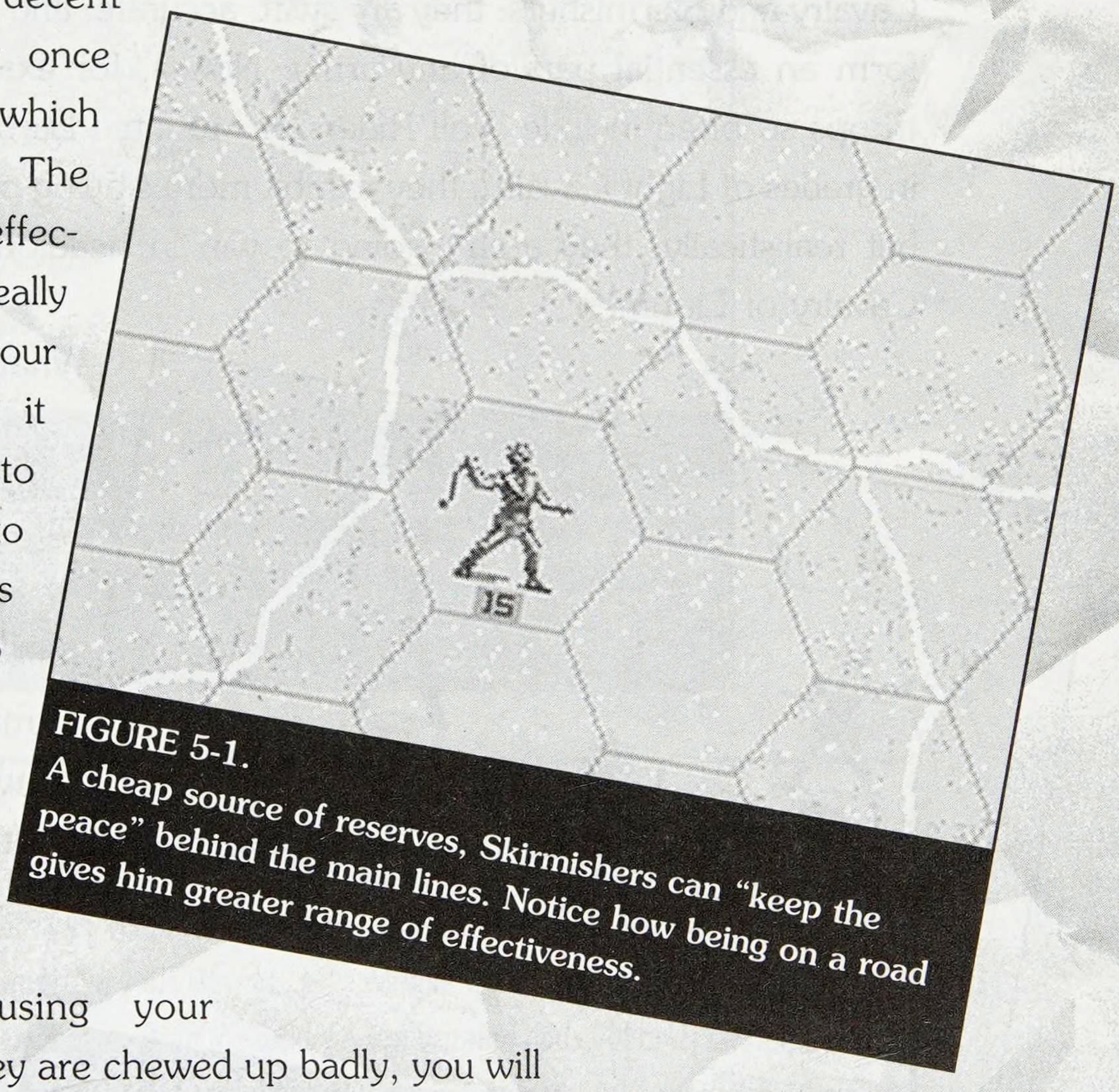


FIGURE 5-1.
A cheap source of reserves, Skirmishers can "keep the peace" behind the main lines. Notice how being on a road gives him greater range of effectiveness.

LIGHT CAVALRY

Light Cavalry are sometimes referred to as "Skirmisher Cavalry" in the game manual, and with good reason. These units combine the best features of Cavalry and Skirmishers: they are swift, accurate, and deceptively deadly. They form an essential part of any army. Notice, for example, how the Shadow troops so often include Wolf Riders or Mounted Barbarians. As you move up in grades of Light Cavalry, they exhibit more staying power versus Melee units, but realistically, they aren't going to win in headlong rushes against Heavy Cavalry or Lionmen.

FIGURE 5-2.
Overcome by bee stings: Skirmishers swarm over this enemy unit like a horde of insects. Even if the unit survives, it won't be much of a factor, since just one adjacent Skirmisher will limit it to receiving only 1 Life point through resting.

What they are good at is covering your wounded units, without forcing you to give up hard-earned territory. A Cavalry "screen" (see Figure 5-3) allows you to mask from the computer where you are massing the bulk of your forces. In addition to keeping the enemy guessing, Light Cavalry are excellent for tying down strong enemy units.

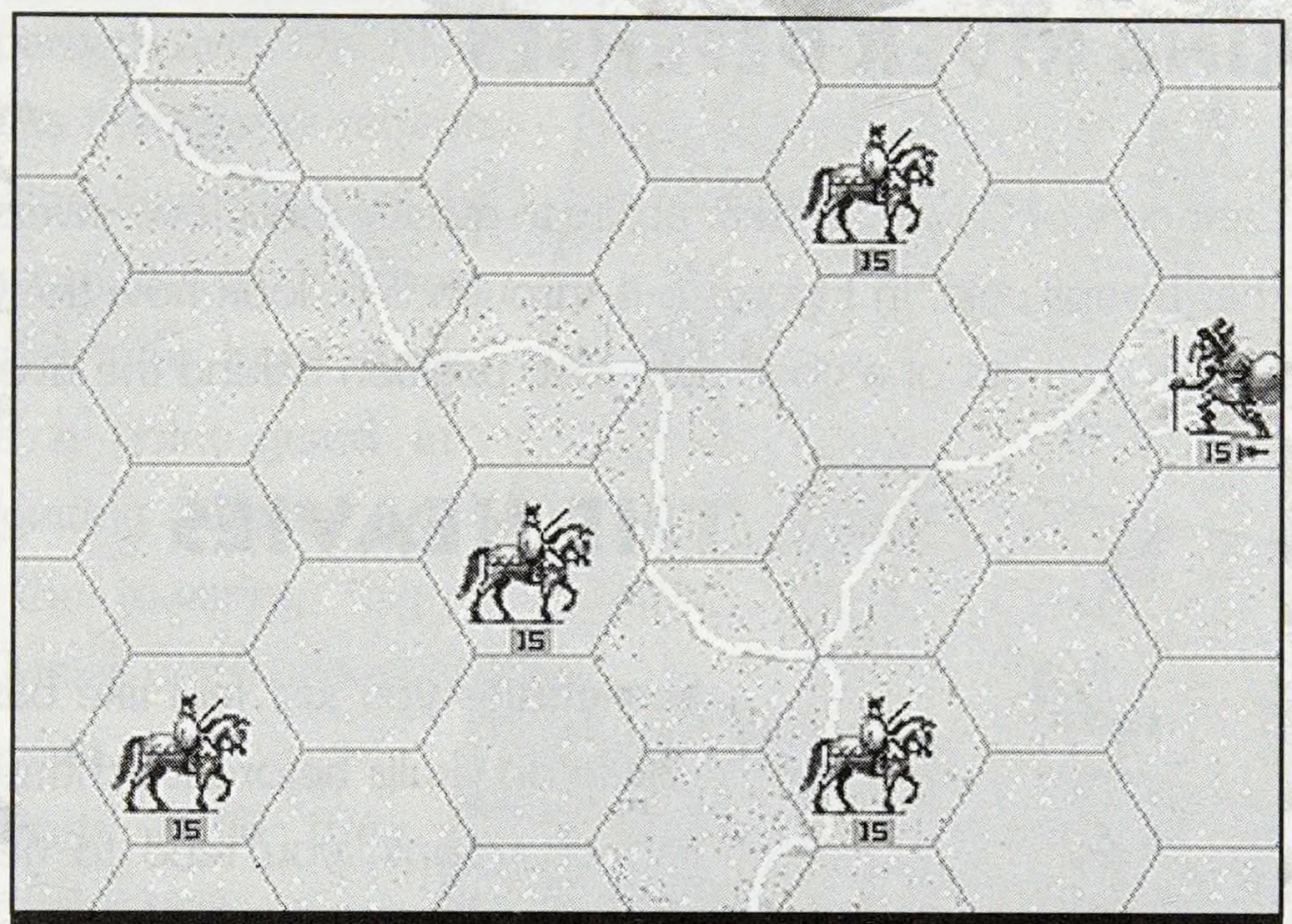
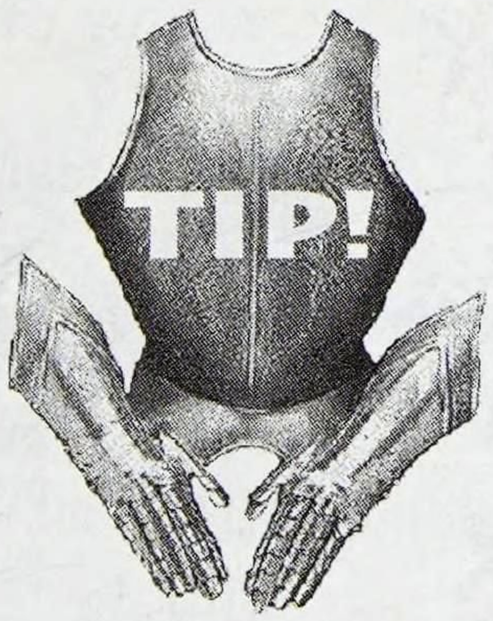


FIGURE 5-3.
Beyond the screen door: Light Cavalry are spaced here so that their ZOCs cover all avenues of approach, while still allowing the Heavy Cavalry and Infantry to quickly move down the road.



Marshal Calis is the patron saint of Cavalry, and of Light Cavalry in particular. Light Cavalry, like Skirmishers, have a 50 percent chance of converting Kills/Wounds to 3 Morale losses, which makes them more likely to retreat in the face of overwhelming odds. All units serving under Marshal Calis have a 5 percent greater chance per continent of converting Hits to Morale losses. This means that on the Dragonscale Archipelago (the fifth continent), Light Cavalry would have a 75 percent chance to convert, making their chances of survival quite good indeed. When you consider that Calis buys Light Cavalry at a 20 percent discount, it's easy to see why they form one of the most important branches of his army.

BREAKING RIVER DEFENSES

The biggest attribute of Cavalry is their ability to quickly move over rivers—obstacles that stop other troops cold. In Figures 5-4 through 5-6, look how the Orc Infantry is quickly maneuvered out of a good defensive position behind the river.

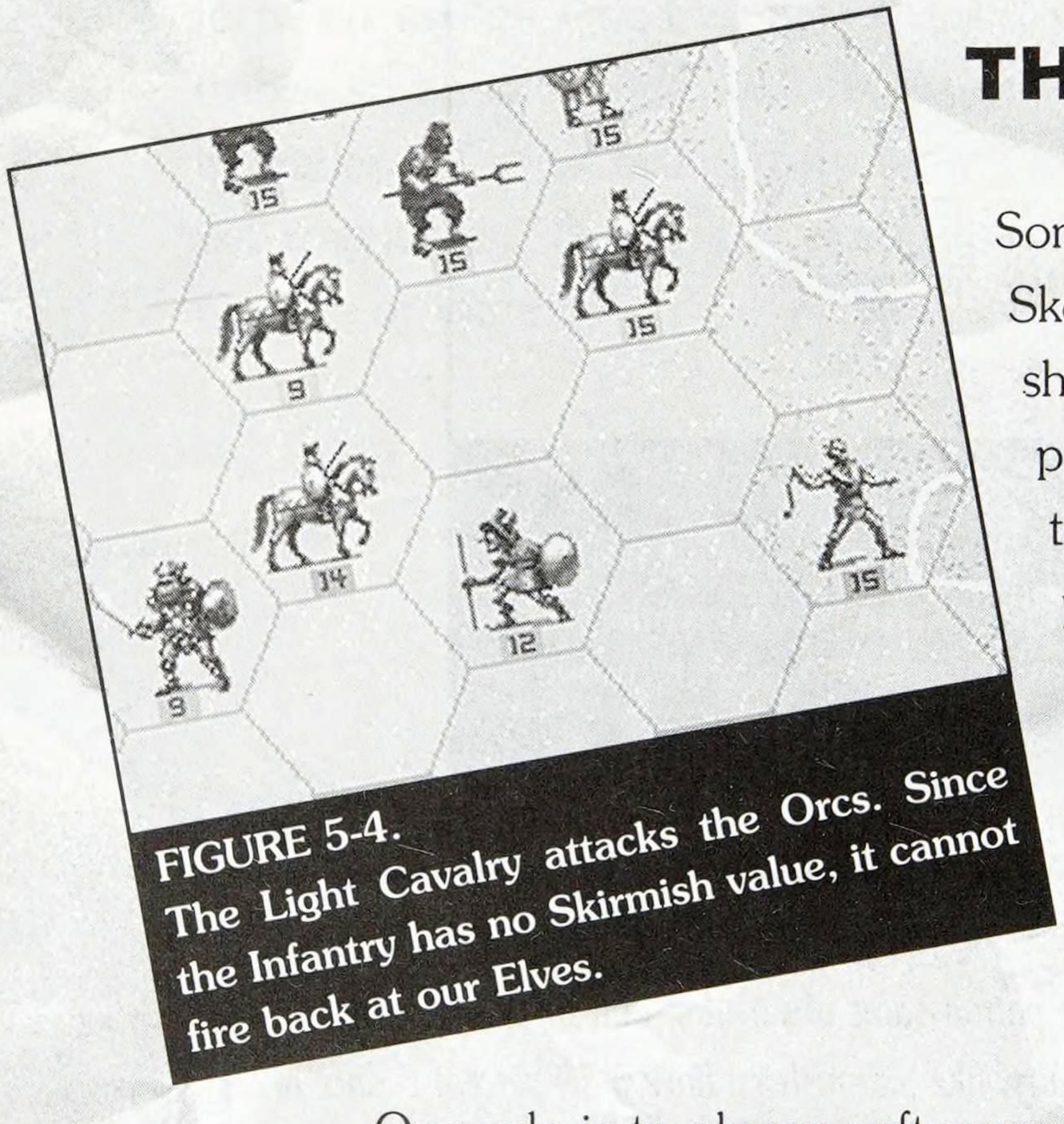


FIGURE 5-4.
The Light Cavalry attacks the Orcs. Since the Infantry has no Skirmish value, it cannot fire back at our Elves.

One rule is to always soften up tough enemies with Light Cavalry and Skirmishers before moving a Melee unit in. First, you benefit from the +4 modifier for having multiple units adjacent to the combat—no one said the units had to both be Melee! Plus, if you have set up your attack properly, the enemy Melee unit will be

THE HEAVIES

Sometimes you just feel like bashing a few Skeleton skulls before lunchtime. And with shock troops, you tend to get what you pay for. Warbands, for instance, are great to box with crippled enemies, but when you meet class foes such as Werebears and Cobramen, you'll need some heavyweights to keep from being bounced right out of the ring.

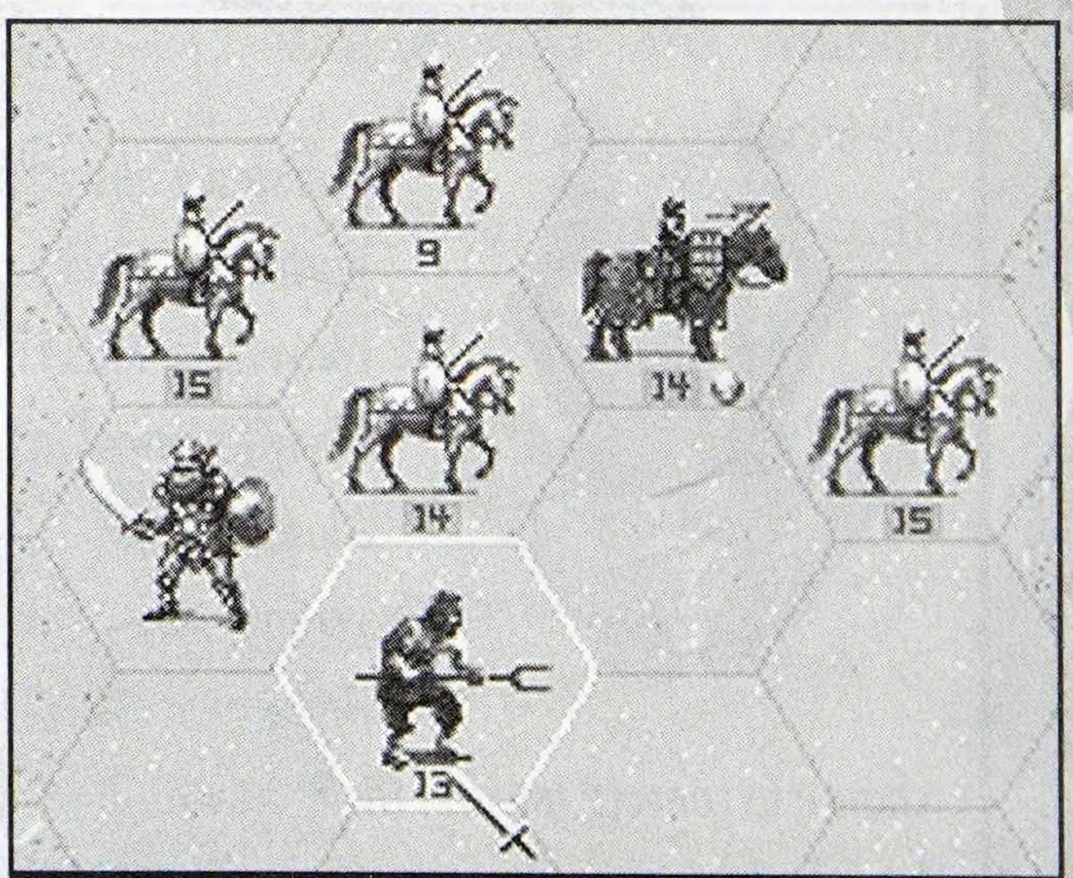


FIGURE 5-5.
Now Disordered, the Orcs are sitting ducks for our Light Infantry, who force them to retreat.

weakened, perhaps even Disordered or Broken. As the enemy retreats, your supporting Skirmisher will be safer from harm, able to perform the same setup next turn—think of them as a point guard in basketball, getting "assists" by passing to the towering "big men" (your Melee units) underneath the basket.

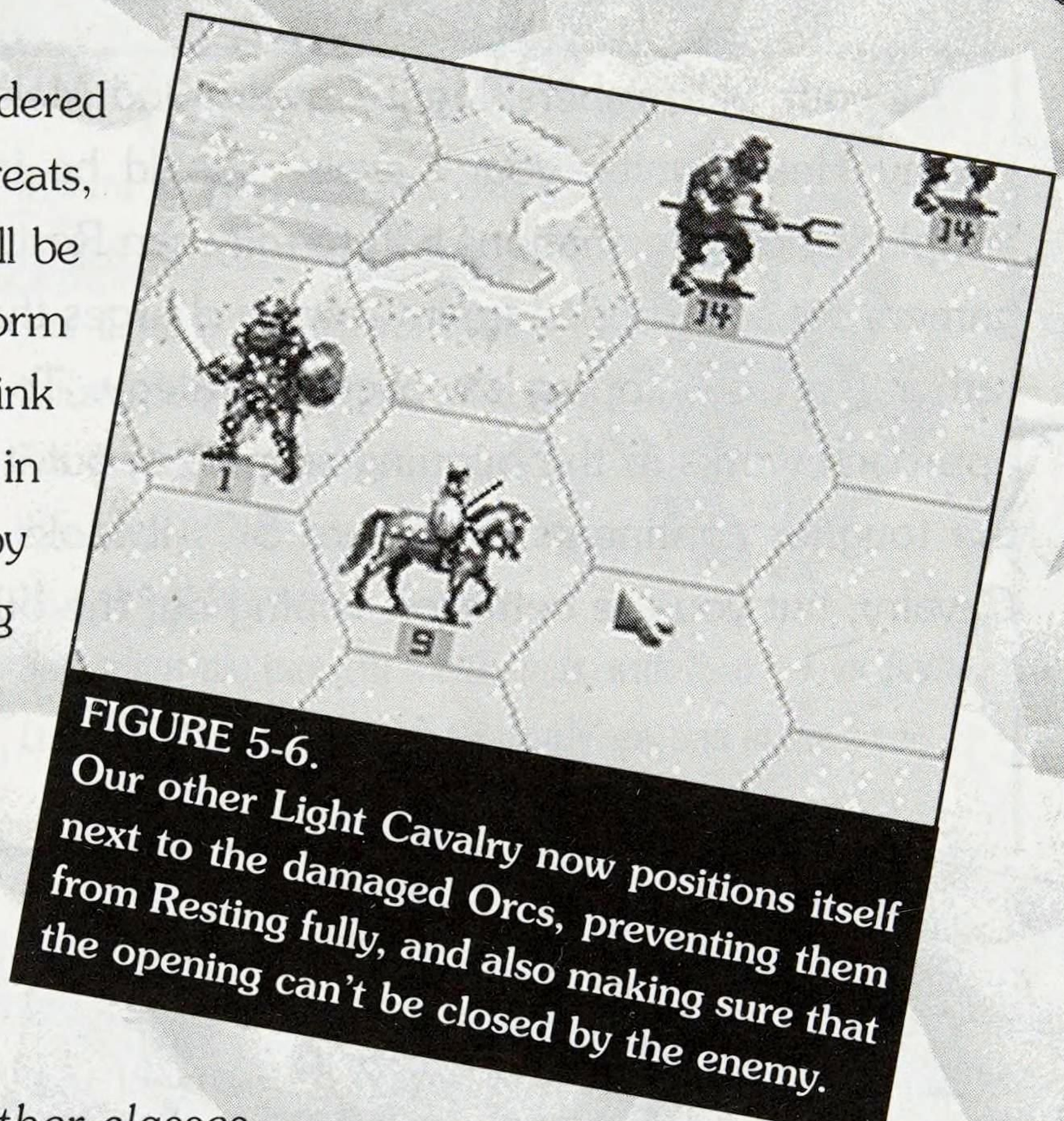


FIGURE 5-6.
Our other Light Cavalry now positions itself next to the damaged Orcs, preventing them from Resting fully, and also making sure that the opening can't be closed by the enemy.

Heavy Units have the following advantages:

- *They have greater combat strengths than other classes.*
- *They have better Armor than other classes.*
- *You get more "bang for the buck" (see Chapter 6 on research).*
- *Because they are usually hotly engaged, Melee units tend to gain experience relatively quickly.*

Melee units aren't perfect, however, as the following disadvantages show:

- *They are slower, sometimes to extremes. Most Mortal units, and even many Beast units, have a movement allowance of only 3.*
- *The best Heavy units, Beasts, can't be upgraded.*
- *Mech units can't be Healed until you capture the Engineer (more on this in later chapters).*
- *Cavalry are particularly susceptible to Sky Hunters, who view them as fast food.*

As your Skirmishers/Light Cavalry and Melee troops are tag-teaming the enemy Heavy units, your Cavalry should be in reserve, ready to wipe out crippled enemy formations before they can Rest. There is a danger here: some gamers get so wrapped up in Cavalry charges that they depend on them solely rather than developing an overall strategy. To be sure, this "run and gun" approach works in the opening scenarios, but it can backfire when you reach the tougher continents. In Figure 5-7, it looks tempting to nail the Undead Cavalry, but you are better off wiping out the other, lesser unit.

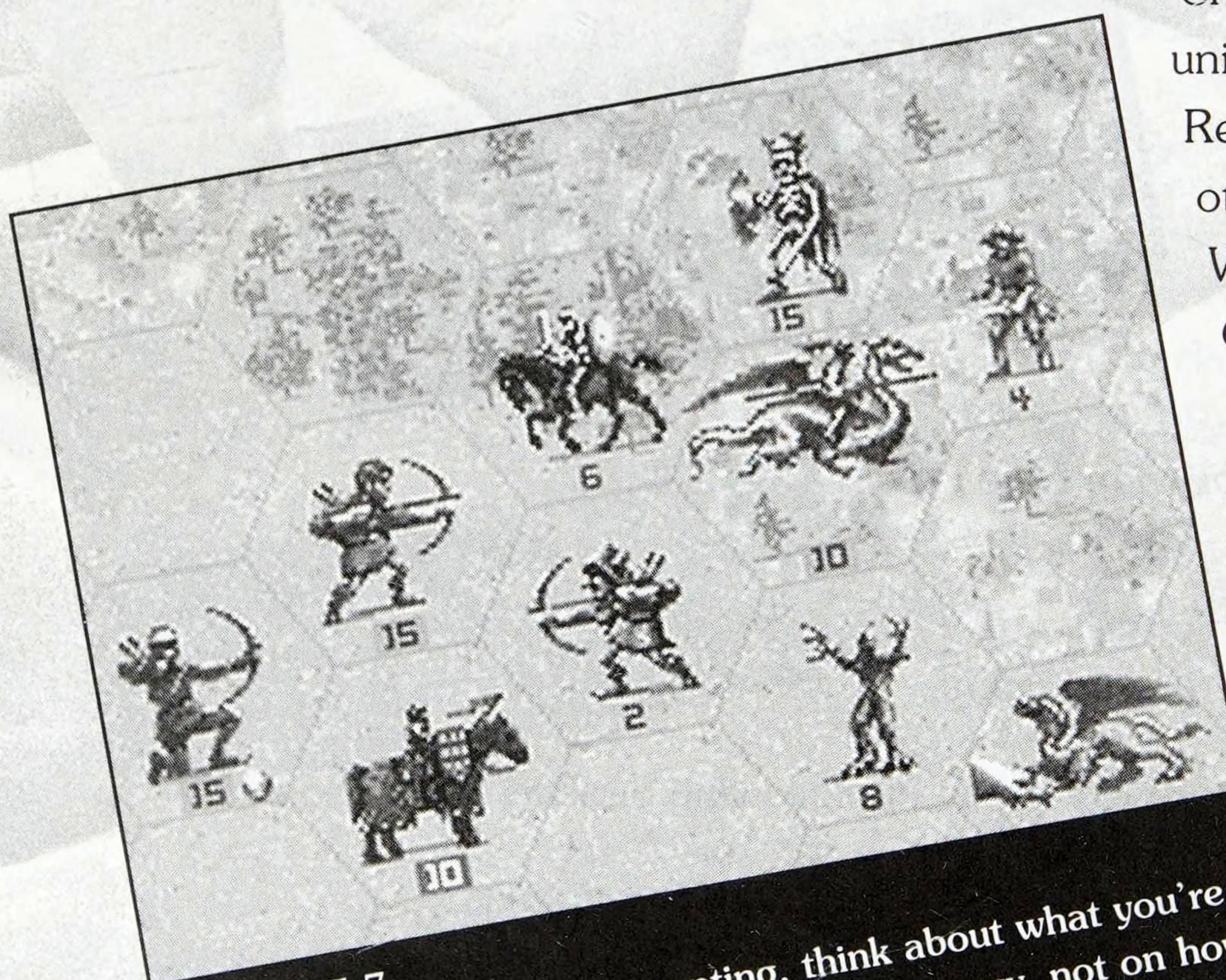
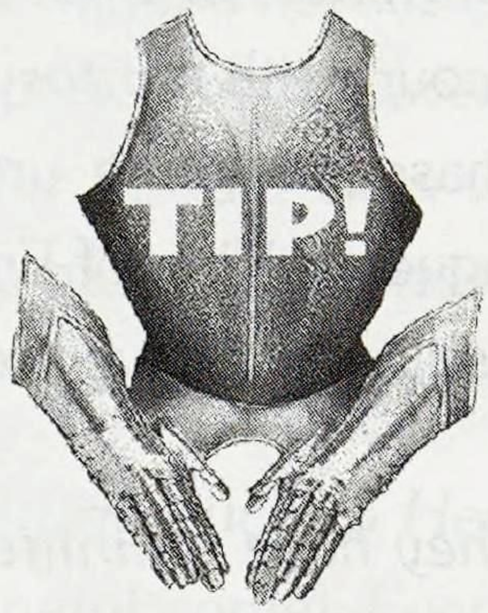


FIGURE 5-7.
When a target looks too tempting, think about what you're doing. Turn-based games are based on strategy, not on how quickly you click your mouse.

Should you force the Undead unit to retreat, it will be able to Rest because you have no other reserves to throw at it. Where it is, the Undead Cavalry will pose little threat, allowing you to destroy it next turn. Meanwhile, getting rid of the crippled unit above removes its ZOCs, allowing you more freedom of movement—and one less unit to worry about getting behind your lines.

Melee units are the key to victory, but they must have a good supporting cast if you are to achieve ultimate victory over the Shadowlord. If you have a chance to nail enemy units out in the open, be merciless. Keep your Combat Modifiers table close at hand and maximize your odds. Finally, don't be afraid to sacrifice units to gain your

objectives—just make sure the losses serve a larger purpose. Remember, *Fantasy General* is based on Medieval warfare. It's *supposed* to be bloody.



Mordra should keep at least half of her army as Heavy Infantry and Cavalry. She receives a 20 percent discount on Beast units. Fire Beetles are cheap, fast, and effective, worth keeping even though they can't upgrade. Barbarians are excellent Melee units, with their +4 for Battle Lust making them a match for nearly any unit in the game.

MISSILE MEN

If you think Archers are wimps, the cream of knighthood in the Middle Ages would have agreed with you—at least until after Agincourt and Crecy, where the power of the English longbow broke the back of the seemingly invincible French heavy cavalry. Of course, the bowmen didn't defeat the knights all by themselves. A muddy field slowed the cavalry charge—weather's something you don't have to worry about in *Fantasy General*—and the few men-at-arms the English had were deployed specifically to funnel the enemy horsemen into an unwieldy traffic jam.

The longbows then emptied their deadly, accurate fire into the mass of mounted soldiers before them. The arrows didn't kill that many soldiers, but they did wreak havoc with the cavalry formations: in *Fantasy General* terms, a lot of Disruptions, Suppressions, and even a few Broken units. Then, the heavy and light infantry cleaned up on the scattered French, with skirmishers harrying the survivors almost back to their own lines.

Of course, historical analogies only go so far with *Fantasy General*. If Henry V had had a few Sandmen and Earth Elementals, he might not have had to worry so much about the French—who might themselves have been riding

bears, rhinos, or Shadow Knights. Although you might not be able to recreate Agincourt with *Fantasy General*, the basic tactics are sound. After all, you *can* purchase Longbow units and use them in much the same way as did the beleaguered King of England.

Missile units have the following advantages:

- *They have unlimited defensive fire in a given turn (see Figure 5-8).*
- *As their experience increases, they become surprisingly effective on attack.*
- *They may fire before Melee units or Skirmishers.*
- *They are the best defense, other than Sky Hunters, against Air units because they have higher Armor ratings than comparable-grade Siege engines.*

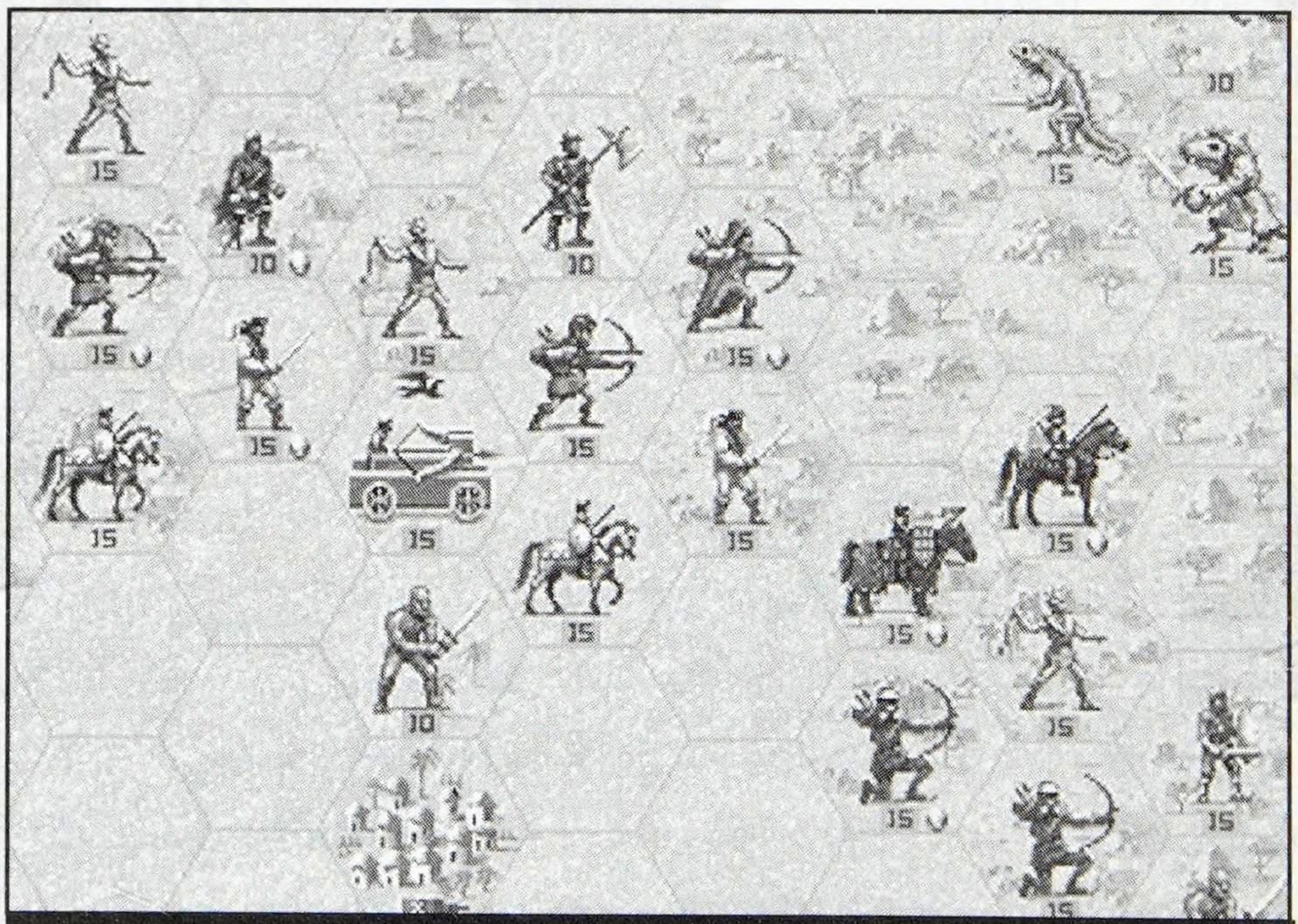


FIGURE 5-8.
The Longbowmen here create an umbrella of fire, protecting all friendly units in turn—provided, of course, that none of them retreat.

Archers will be a mainstay of your army right up until the end because they are relatively inexpensive given their defensive fire support. The discovery of Gunpowder is nice, but you'll quickly trade Pistoliers for Fire Archers when the opportunity arises, if only for the Magical attack you gain. Regardless, the disadvantages of Missile units are big ones:

- *Almost nonexistent Melee strength leaves you a sitting duck to Heavy Infantry (you do get that +4 versus Cavalry, which helps some). Even the highest-grade Royal Archers are a lowly "2" in Melee. Take some solace that the Shadow Missile-users are just as weak.*
- *Low Armor values are a problem, especially since the Shadow troops have better Armor (see Table 5-1).*
- *Some of your best Missile choices move at the slower Closed rate. If you stick to Open terrain, you are more vulnerable to enemy Cavalry.*

One tough factor to overcome is that the Shadowlord tends to have better Missile troops than you at comparable levels. Then again, this makes sense: the classic Western always gives the guy in the black hat the quicker draw; in *Fantasy General*, it's the Arrows of Death that rain down upon unsuspecting Mortals. The following is a comparison of Good versus Evil Missile-users.

Table 5-1: What's the Range?

Friendly	Spot	Melee	Missile	Armor	Grade	Enemy	Spot	Melee	Missile	Armor
Elf Bow	2	1	7	2	0	Slave Archer	2	1	8	2
Longbow	2	1	10	5	1	Goblin Archer	2	1	11	4
Pistolier	2	1	13	8	2	Orc Archer	2	1	14	9
Gunner	2	1	16	11	3	Orc Longbow	2	1	17	10
Fire Archer	3	2	17	14	4	Skeleton Archer	3	2	20	8
Royal Archer	3	2	20	17	5	Steam Gunner	3	2	21	18

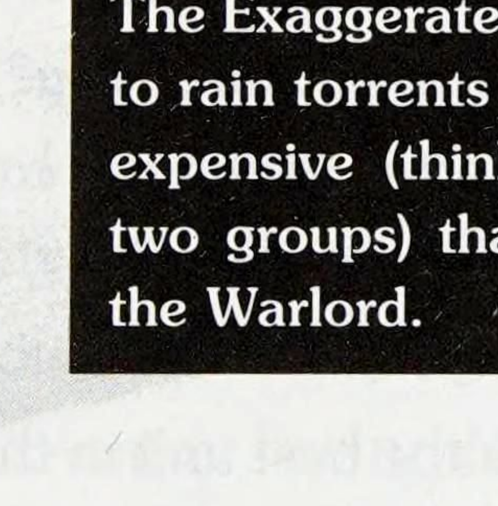
In every grade of Missile troops, the Bad Guys have a better Fire Value. The most interesting matchup is the Fire Archers versus the Skeleton Archers, where the Good Guys have much better Armor—undead flesh evidently falls apart more easily. There's little you can do about this unit for unit deficit; like the outgunned frontier Sheriff, you must "shoot straighter" to win.

THE PORCUPINE

Two or more Archers can provide support for a unit in the front lines; they can also provide support for each other when adjacent. A good tactic is to form Archers into a "Porcupine" defense, as shown in Figures 5-9 and 5-10 below. While a constant battering by enemy forces will take your Missile units out of action, the Porcupine does give them some defense when a front-line unit is eliminated or forced to retreat. It also creates an umbrella of anti-Air fire versus Sky Hunters.

FIGURE 5-9.
A Porcupine Defense is the best way to keep both your front line troops and your supporting archers from being impaled on the enemy cavalry's lances.

FIGURE 5-10.
The Exaggerated Porcupine, shown here, is a surefire way to rain torrents of arrows upon your enemies. It is also so expensive (think about purchasing six Archers for only two groups) that it's hardly practical—except maybe for the Warlord.



Veterans of Panzer General *will recognize the similarities between the Porcupine and artillery groupings in* PG. *The advantage of the Porcupine is that, unlike artillery, the Missile units still retain offensive capability–they don't have to limber and unlimber.*

Using Missile units offensively requires that you develop a good sense of timing. You should attack with Archers of grade 2 and lower only when there is a good chance of eliminating an enemy. Gunners, Fire Archers, and Royal Archers however, have enough Armor and firepower to defend themselves if need be—especially if they are in Porcupine formation. But don't get in the habit of using your Missile troops like Skirmishers.

GAINING "AER" SUPERIORITY

Swooping down with unearthly speed, Malric the Dragonlord savages Mortal and Magical troops alike with unrelenting fury. Spying an attack force of Flying Monkeys harassing some Pistoliers, Malric changes direction, ripping wings from their twisted, obscene bodies. What's that? A flight of Balloonmen! The next turn Malric pirouettes in the air, cajoling his powerful mount, as together they deflate the unholy dirigibles, and with them the Shadow's last chance of winning the battle.

OK, so Malric's great. Personally, I think Malric is the best unit in the game—but since he only joins you if you're playing Knight Marshal Calis, you'd better learn how to gain control of the air if you want to play any other Champion.

HUNT THE SKY

One thing you notice quickly is that Sky Hunters are *expensive*. At the beginning of the game, I would recommend researching but not buying them. In fact, this is one time where Beast units don't have the edge: Flying Snakes aren't worth 5 more gold for 2 more Melee than Wyverns, and Green Dragons certainly aren't worth 2-1/2 times the price for only 3 additional Melee.

Bombardiers aren't much better, but at least Hawk Riders are a very affordable 18, and they can be upgraded.

What you want to do—and we'll discuss this further in the next chapter on research—is to get through the first couple of scenarios without buying Air units, *except* for one Hawk Rider. Use this raptor primarily to hunt down and eliminate Broken or crippled units. If the AI starts building a lot of Sky Hunters, counter with more Archers; then when you get rewards of gold from liberating victory hexes and shrines, there is plenty of time and money to buy a decent Sky Hunter—hopefully, at least a Silver Dragon. Until you rescue the Engineer, don't even try to buy Mech Air units because Air combat is the bloodiest in the game, and you won't be able to replace your losses.

Tactics with Air units are pretty simple:

- *Use Sky Hunters against Cavalry, especially Light Cavalry with low Melee.*
- *Escort your Bombardiers to protect them from enemy Sky Hunters.*
- *In your first campaign, play the Knight Marshal Calis, so that you get to enjoy having Malric, who is more than a match for any opposing Sky Hunter.*
- *Use Malric's Panic spell to get enemy units out of tough defensive positions.*
- *When you get an Air unit at 3 experience or above, don't subject it to undue risk. These units are simply too expensive to replace.*

In general, Air combat resembles World War I dog fights more than World War II aerial bombings. There really aren't any B-17 equivalents here, and Malric is much more fun if you play him in the manner of the Red Baron or Eddie Rickenbacker.

AMBUSHES

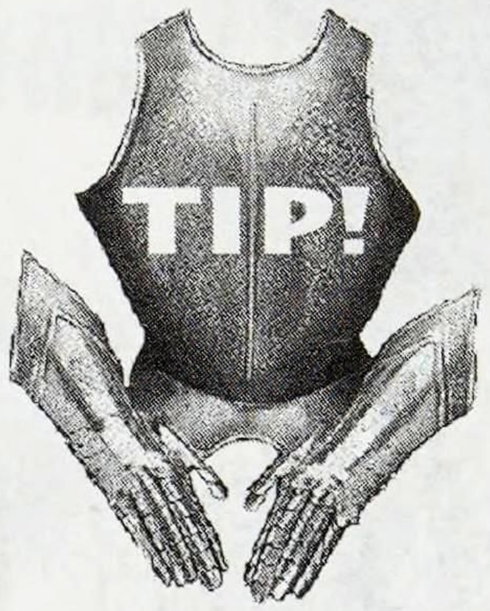
Fantasy General is a lot tougher to play if you use the hidden movement option, but don't shy away from it. Remember, since the game employs an ethical AI, hidden movement really is hidden for both you *and* the computer. And if the computer can't see all of your units, it helps your cause to set traps occasionally.

The easiest way to do this is to research Scout units—Skirmishers that unfortunately resemble Archers. Because Scouts (and Foresters, Trailmen, and Trail Runners) can turn invisible, a dastardly trick is to set them, while unseen, in front of a Missile unit, well in range of enemy Cavalry. The computer will assume you've made a mistake, and charge straight into the invisible wall of your Scouts (see Figure 5-11).

FIGURE 5-11.
The door is locked, and while banging on the Scout's invisible door, this Cavalry's welcome consists of a shower of arrows.

Since units, when surprised, don't get to return fire, the enemy Cavalry will bear the brunt of the Archer's defensive fire (at +4), plus the Skirmish rating of the Scout. If you overuse this tactic,

Sometime between the third and final continent, you will run into a nasty surprise. While you gleefully set ambushes for the enemy, little do you realize that the Shadowlord will eventually do the same to you. Trail Runners, those wonderful grade-5 Skirmishers (23 combat), are motivated by greed: they'll go to the side with the most gold. If the Evil One can afford it–and he usually can on all but the easiest levels–you'll run into an invisible force. If you wish to avoid this too-familiar trap, think twice before you attack seeming holes in a line of defense.



however, the computer will target your Scouts with Sky Hunters, and so on, when they are visible and vulnerable.

This chapter has provided a basic grounding in general battle tactics. As we go through specific scenarios we'll expand on these concepts, addressing specific threats and the goals needed to win each campaign. Before that, however, the next two chapters cover researching troops and Magic, two other vital aspects of *Fantasy General* strategy.

CHAPTER 6

Military Intervention

How to Research and Evaluate Units

It's been a long, hard day of campaigning. You've sacked towns, turned Skeletons to dust, sent Ratmen back to their lair, dispelled the Undead, and found the sword of Ultimate Doom to Tax Collectors. You even managed to win the scenario early enough to get an extra award of 150 gold. After enticing your exhausted troops to oil their weapons, lest they rust, you return to the solitude of your tent.

Finally, you settle down with a hearty ale (virtual or real, your choice), and ponder what to do with the authorization you've received from the Council of Five to increase your Army Maximum by two units. Should you buy that handsome Silver Dragon from Malric's cousin Baldric, or would a shiny new Chariot give you more mileage? Looking out from your tent for inspiration, you see Peasants, tired but loyal, wearing their tattered homemade uniforms with pride. Instantly, you decide: reinvest the gold into training, and upgrade the Peasants to Militia!

But what of the brave Swordsmen, the mysterious Elf Knights? There are no other, newer weapons to upgrade them. You smile, realizing that this means a return to research, something you have not done since your days in University those many years ago, when peace still reigned o'er the land...

ARMY MAXIMUM: THE KEY TO VICTORY

Even in mythology, armies must have supplies to survive and fight at full strength. There are no supply rules, *per se*, in *Fantasy General*. Therefore, everything comes down to economics and politics. Implied but never explicitly

stated in the rules, the Council of Five seems to want to control your purse strings and the size of your army. You may become too powerful, perhaps, and thereby a danger to the Council. Alternatively, you may lose, and the less support they provide, the more the Council will be able to distance themselves from the Shadowlord's wrath.

Naïve? Certainly, but then what do you expect from medieval/fantasy dealings in smoke-filled rooms? Obviously, the better you perform, the more likely the Council is to come out of their shell and support you; everybody likes a winner. In the beginning of the campaign, though, you have an army in name only; it will be some time before you lead a force of truly epic size.

CREATING YOUR FIRST ARMY

Before the campaign begins, each Champion is allowed to buy four additional units, combining them with the force they automatically start with (see Table 6-1). This section discusses the best choices for this initial selection. In general, though, be careful what new units you choose because you must either live with them, in the case of Beasts, or pay the costs to upgrade them. Upgrading requires research, of course, and a discussion of this complex, and vital, activity follows.

Table 6-1: Army Maximum at Start

Champion	Hvy Inf	Lt Inf	Cav	Lt Cav	Skrmsh	Magic	Missile	Siege	Air	Total
Sorceress Mordra	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	6
Archmage Krell	3	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	7
Marshal Calis	1	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	8
Warlord Marcas	1	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	6

Since all Champions are allowed to build four additional units when you begin the campaign, you're probably thinking: "Wait a minute! Isn't the Warlord supposed to start with more units in his core army?" Well, that is what the rules say. What they *should* say is that Lord Marcas will have the biggest army of the four characters by the time you reach the second continent. Remember that Marcas is a magnet for Heroes and Volunteer units, *neither* of which count against his Army Maximum.

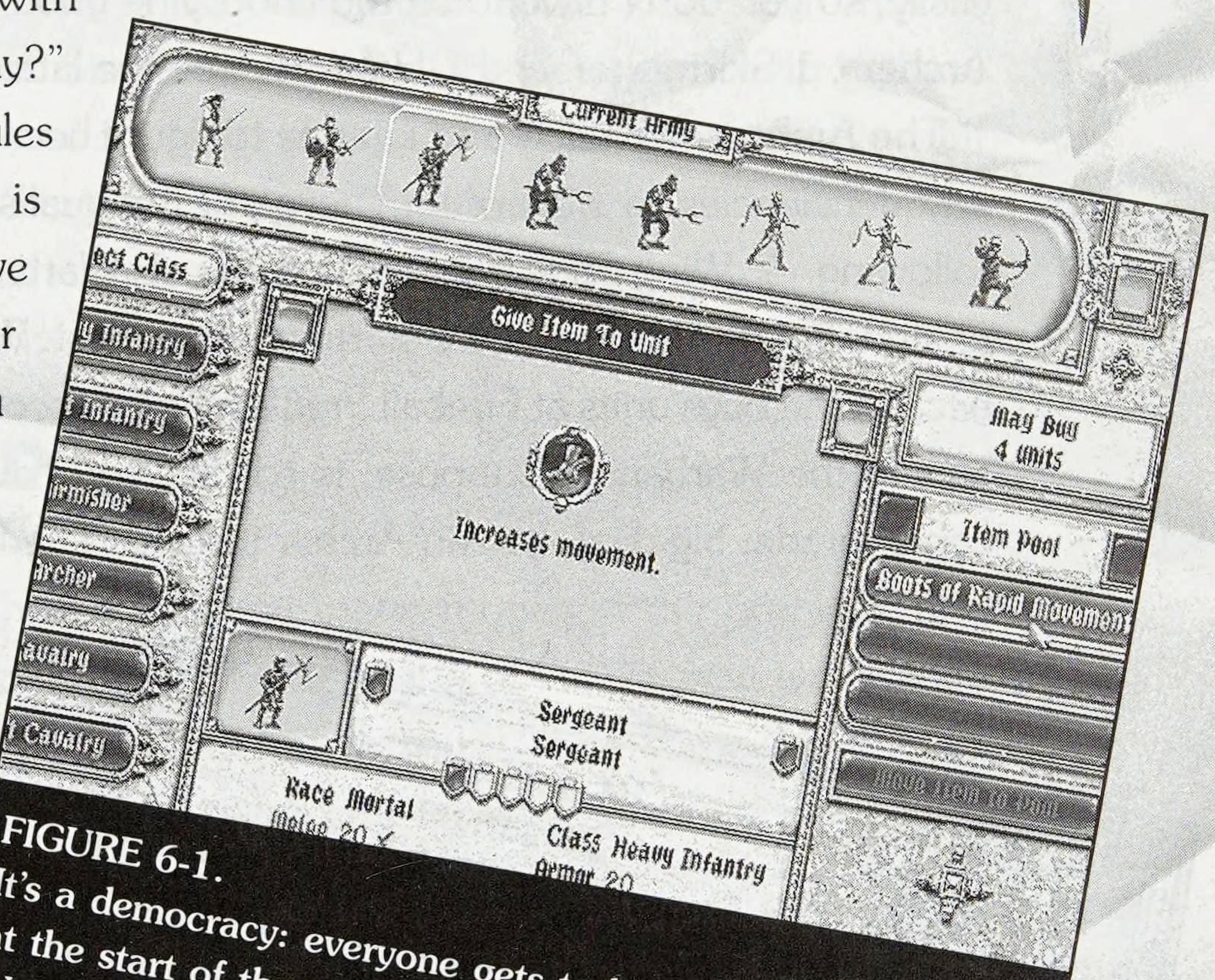


FIGURE 6-1.
It's a democracy: everyone gets to buy four additional units at the start of the campaign. That doesn't seem to slow the Warlord down, though.

The Warlord is so powerful that you can choose one of the following paths:

- *1 Cavalry, 1 Heavy Infantry, 1 Archer, 1 Light Cavalry—A balanced force mix to go with your Skirmishers and Infantry already in hand.*
- *2 Cavalry, 2 Heavy Infantry—More firepower; you'll need to buy Light Cavalry in a later scenario.*
- *2 Cavalry, 1 Light Cavalry, 1 Archer—Probably the best to start with; the Warlord can afford to be mobile and aggressive. Besides, you'll pick up Volunteer Infantry along the way.*

Marshal Calis actually gets off to the best start, with a total of twelve units (counting the four he gets to build). Since they are Mortal units, they upgrade easily, so you don't have to be too choosy. A good way to start is by building 2 Archers, 1 Skirmisher, and 1 Hawk Rider—the latter because you can afford to.

The Archmage Krell is a tough one to figure because his magic spells balance any deficiencies in his army. The game manual's suggestion is to build the following: 1 Wing Rider, 1 Air Warrior, 1 Warband, 1 Unicorn. Not to be unkind, but this is a mediocre starting mix at best. Wing Riders are OK for Krell because he buys units at Fireball Fred's Magic Discount House. The idea behind buying the Warband, I suppose, is so that you have a cheap Mortal unit you can upgrade; big deal, buy an Archer instead. The Unicorn is a must if you are to have any firepower. My recommended mix for Krell is to ride into battle with 2 Unicorns, 1 Archer, and 1 Wing Rider.

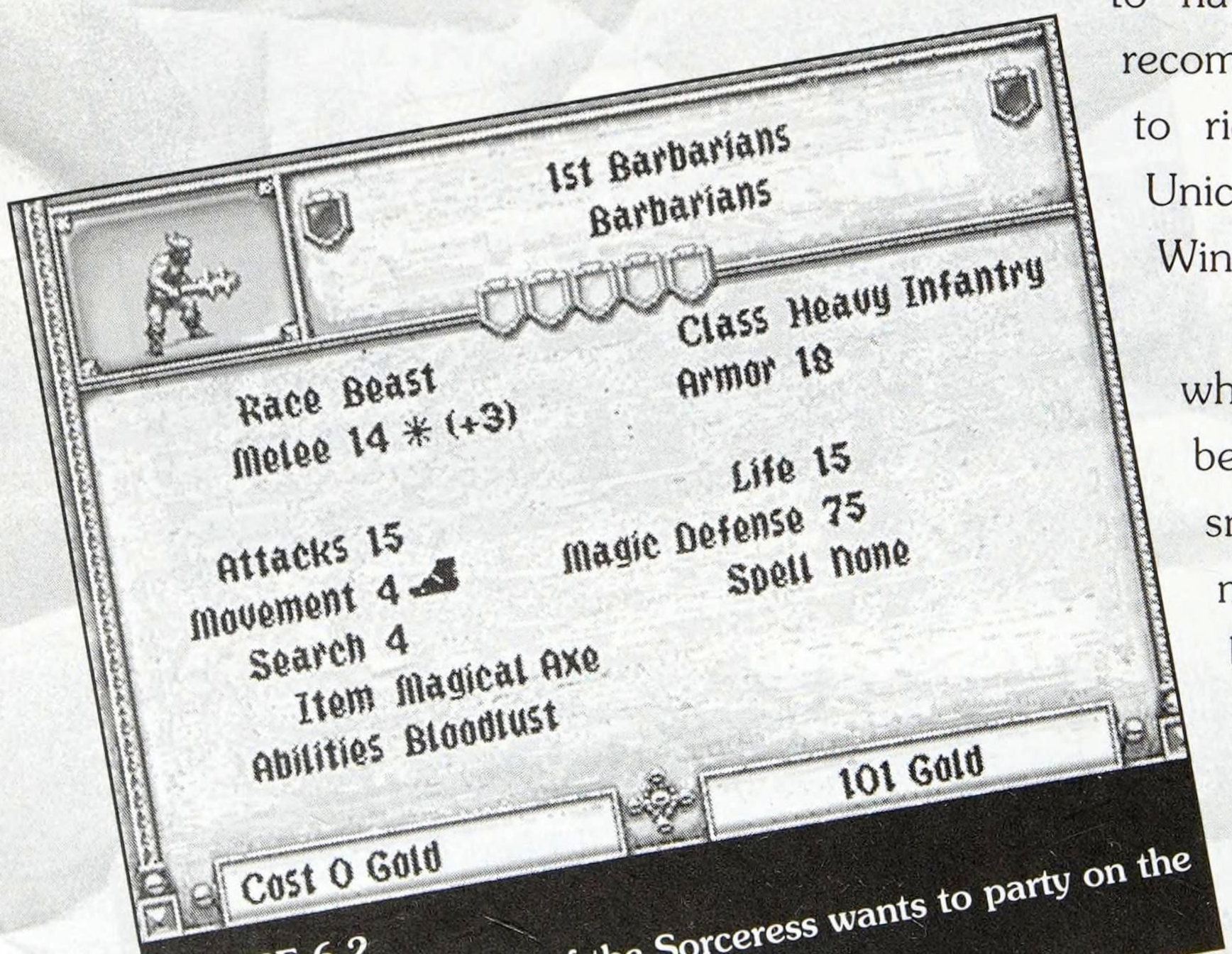


FIGURE 6-2.
Barbarians are a must if the Sorceress wants to party on the second continent.

Mordra is the X-factor when deciding on units because she has the smallest Army Maximum—a mere ten to begin the campaign. Another Lizardmen unit is a good choice; when your Army Maximum increases (after a couple of battles) *definitely* add at least one Barbarian

to the mix. Yes, they cost 25 each, but you'll have a lot more than your starting gold chest by the time you've won a couple of scenarios. And remember, Beast units *don't upgrade*; Barbarian units, once experienced, are good units to keep around for a long time. Similarly, another Fire Beetle will help get you through the first continent, and it's fairly cheap. You could then afford an Elf Bowman, and a disposable Slinger. If you want an Air unit, you'll have to pass on the Heavy Infantry until after you win the first scenario.

FANTASTIC R&D

Research seems very straightforward: You throw money at the problem, and eventually you get a new technology. In the World of Aer, a new technology may be the invention of Gunpowder, the discovery of Arcane Magics, or something so mundane as more stable platforms for Siege Engines. Few things in war are ever as simple as they seem, however.

Each category (Cavalry, Lt. Infantry, Missile, etc.) has five grades of units. When you begin the game, all your units are at grade zero or grade one (such as the Heavy Cavalry). The system of improving from one grade to the next is logical: Low-grade technologies, such as Infantry, are cheaper to research than Flying Units; and you can't skip grades, even if you don't wish to build those particular units—if you desire a solid-state TV, the vacuum tube still precedes the transistor, to use a more modern analogy.

All this gets interesting because each Champion builds different kinds of units. While Lord Marcas and Marshal Calis build mostly Mortal units, they also tend to be the first to benefit from Mech technology, due to their larger Army Maximums. Mordra has the monopoly on research and development of Beast units, while Krell prefers Magical units. But there are formulas that determine how your research dollar is divided.

Let's assume that you, as Mordra, research units in a category where you have the option to build both Beast and Mortal units. For each 4 gold you spend, 4 go to the Beast category, and 2 goes to the Mortal category. In other words, while learning about Beast Infantry, you automatically learn about Mortal Infantry. If Mordra received a 200 gold reward and was researching second-grade Heavy Infantry at the maximum 15 percent, 30 would go to research Werebears in the Beast category, while 15 gold would go toward Mortal Pikemen (you have to invent high-grade poleaxes, I suppose). Then, when Mordra acquires Mech technology, she will get free funding for Mech. In the above example, Mech Infantry would get 30 gold. The same applies to Krell with Magical, Mortal, and Mech, and similarly with the other characters.

The twin components of research are money and time—it's assumed that the brilliant minds of Aer will eventually solve all technological mysteries, given enough of each resource. The time element is abstracted, so that one round of research is conducted in the time between scenarios. Thus, after winning your first scenario in the campaign as Mordra, you would see the results shown in Figure 6-3.

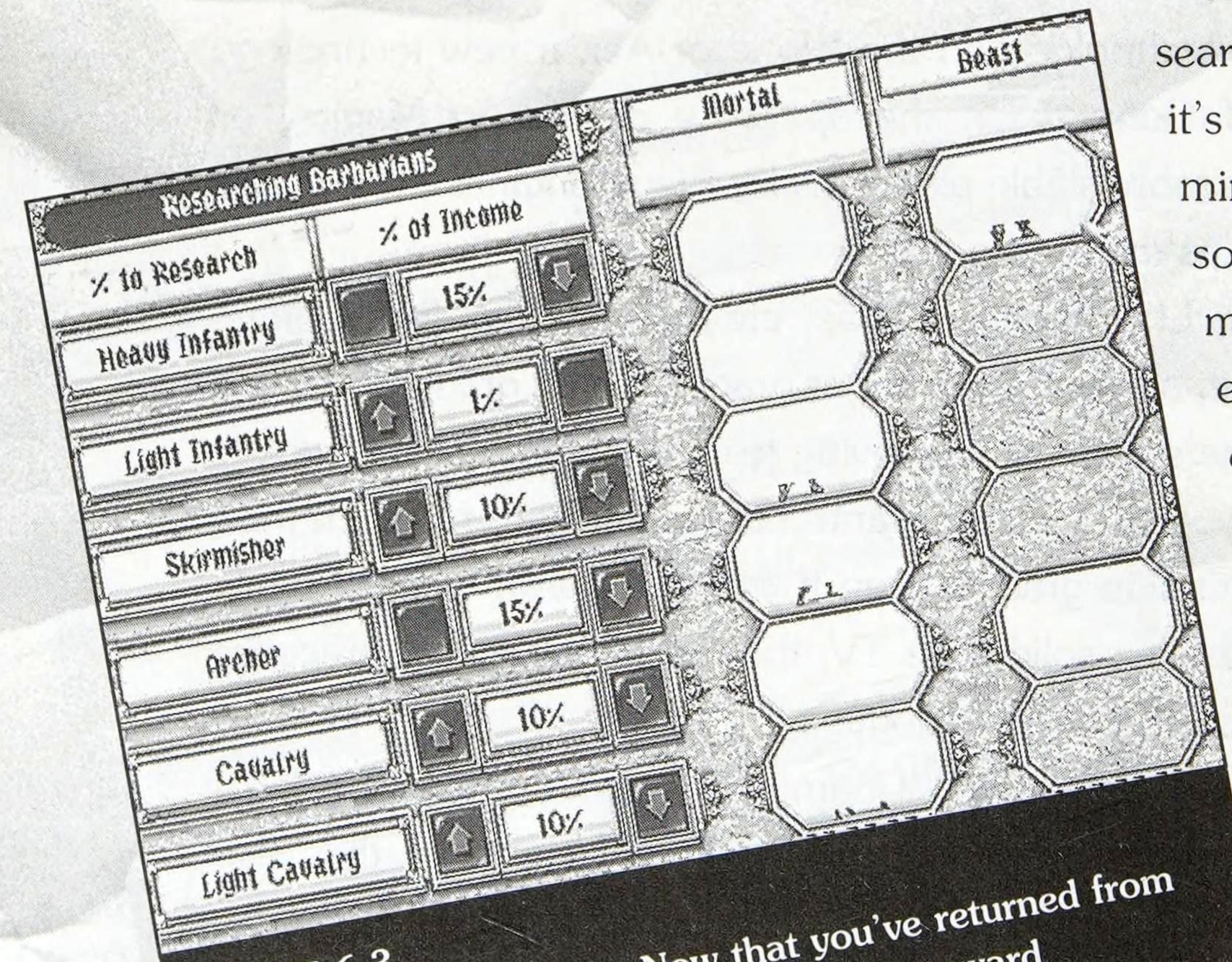


FIGURE 6-3.
The pause that refreshes: Now that you've returned from battle, Mistress, our Beast unit is halfway toward completion, but we haven't quite figured out these Mortal units—such strange creatures.

By the end of the first continent, you should be up to third-grade troops in at least one category, as in Figure 6-4.

The nice thing about research is that it's a one-stop shopping fee. Once the research is complete to the new grade, you don't have to spend time training your units; it's all built into the system.

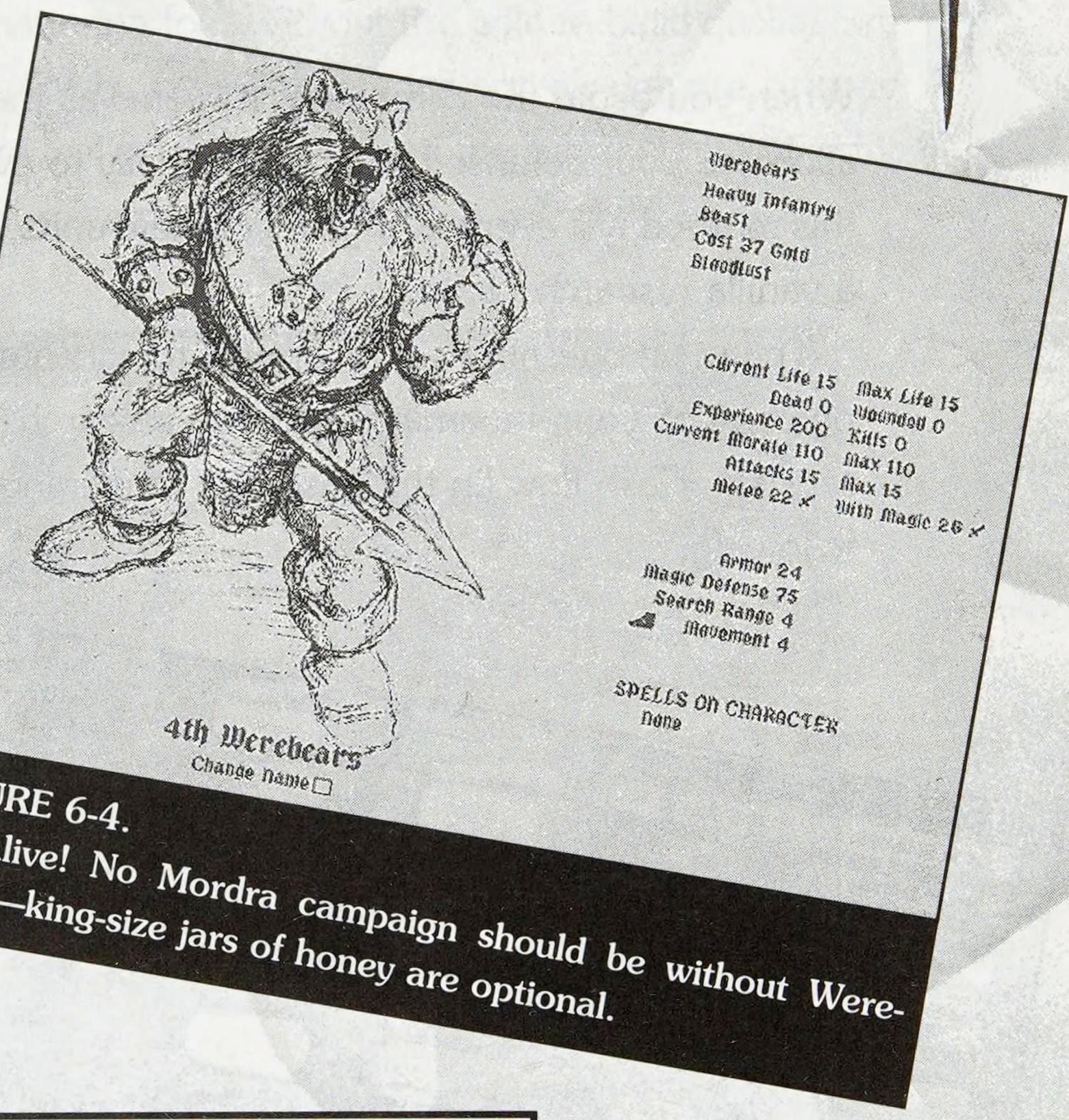
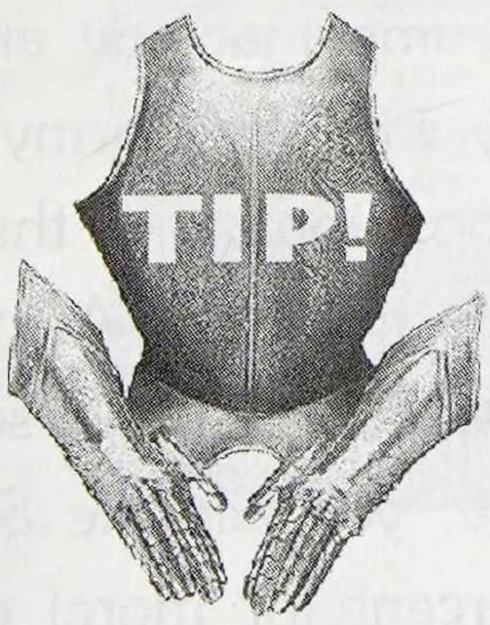


FIGURE 6-4.
It's Alive! No Mordra campaign should be without Werebears—king-size jars of honey are optional.



You are often better off buying low-grade units to preserve gold, so that you may maintain your Army Maximum after losses (which you shall indeed suffer playing the game on High difficulty). As you gain greater rewards of gold, you can quickly upgrade troops to the higher-researched levels–except for Beasts, that is.

RESEARCH: THE FIRST HALTING STEPS

When you begin the campaign, it seems as though the Fantasy Commune has allocated your defense budget out equally to every category (Figure 6-5). While this method will eventually gain you new units, you are certain to lose with such a vanilla research strategy.

The main question is: How much to allocate? You may actually use up to 90 percent of your incoming gold for research, but about 70 percent is more sensible. Cash flow (in this case, the remaining 30 percent) is necessary for the following:

- *Purchasing new units between scenarios*
- *Upgrading old units between scenarios*
- *Emergency Recruitment in Towns to replace Kills*
- *Buying units during scenarios.*

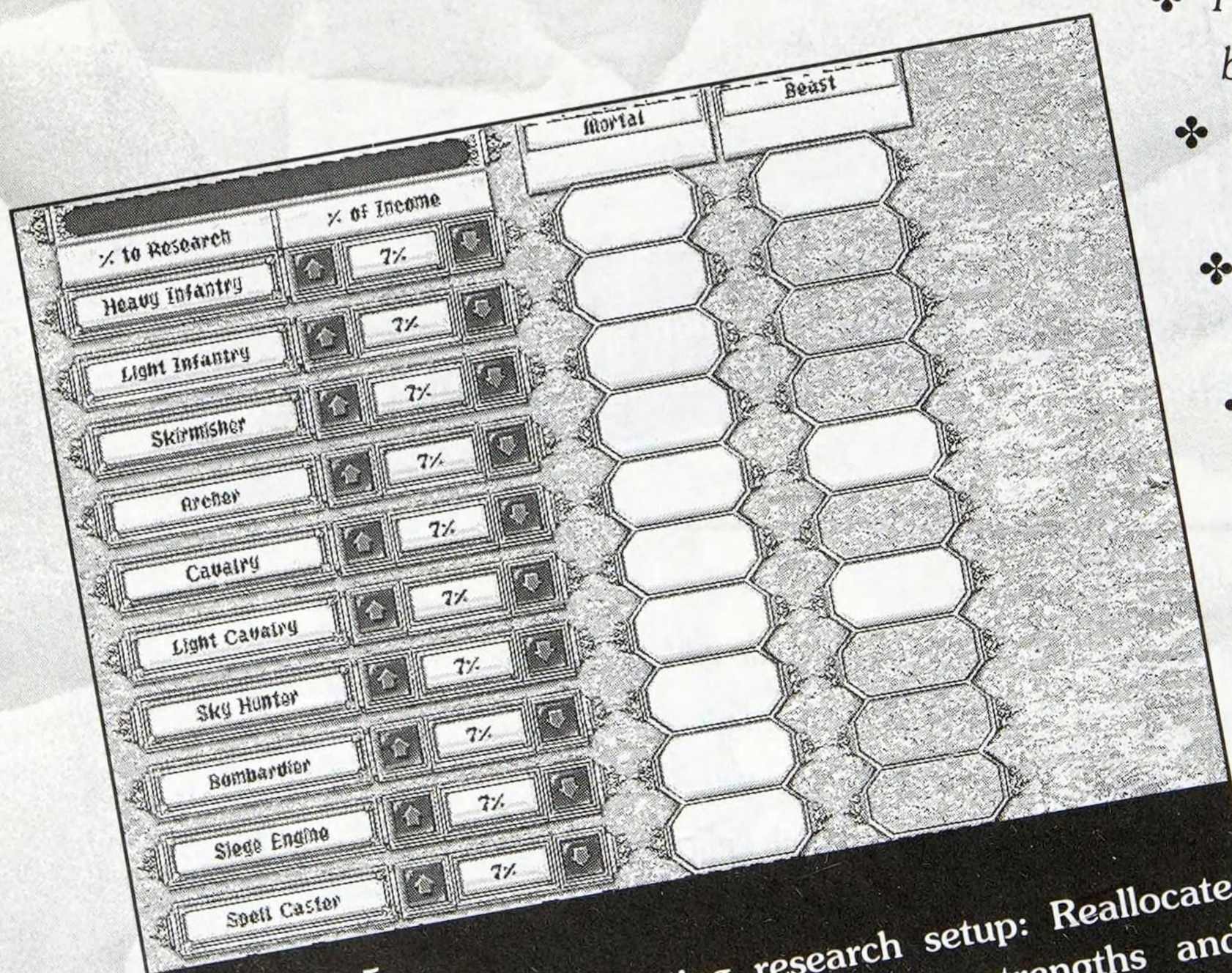


FIGURE 6-5.
The politically correct starting research setup: Reallocate these funds to cover your Champion's strengths and weaknesses.

Assume that you are happy with your army's composition and that you are at Army Maximum. Feeling secure, you allocate 80 percent (or more) of your gold to research. In the next scenario, the AI sends the entire

Wizard of Oz collection of Flying Monkeys at you. Your Sky Hunters fight bravely but fall prey to the insidious, chattering foe. Without the gold to build quality Sky Hunters, you must either settle for building Archers for anti-air defense or pray that you will gain enough gold to bail you out. And even the latter might not work because 80 percent of any gold reward will go straight to research.

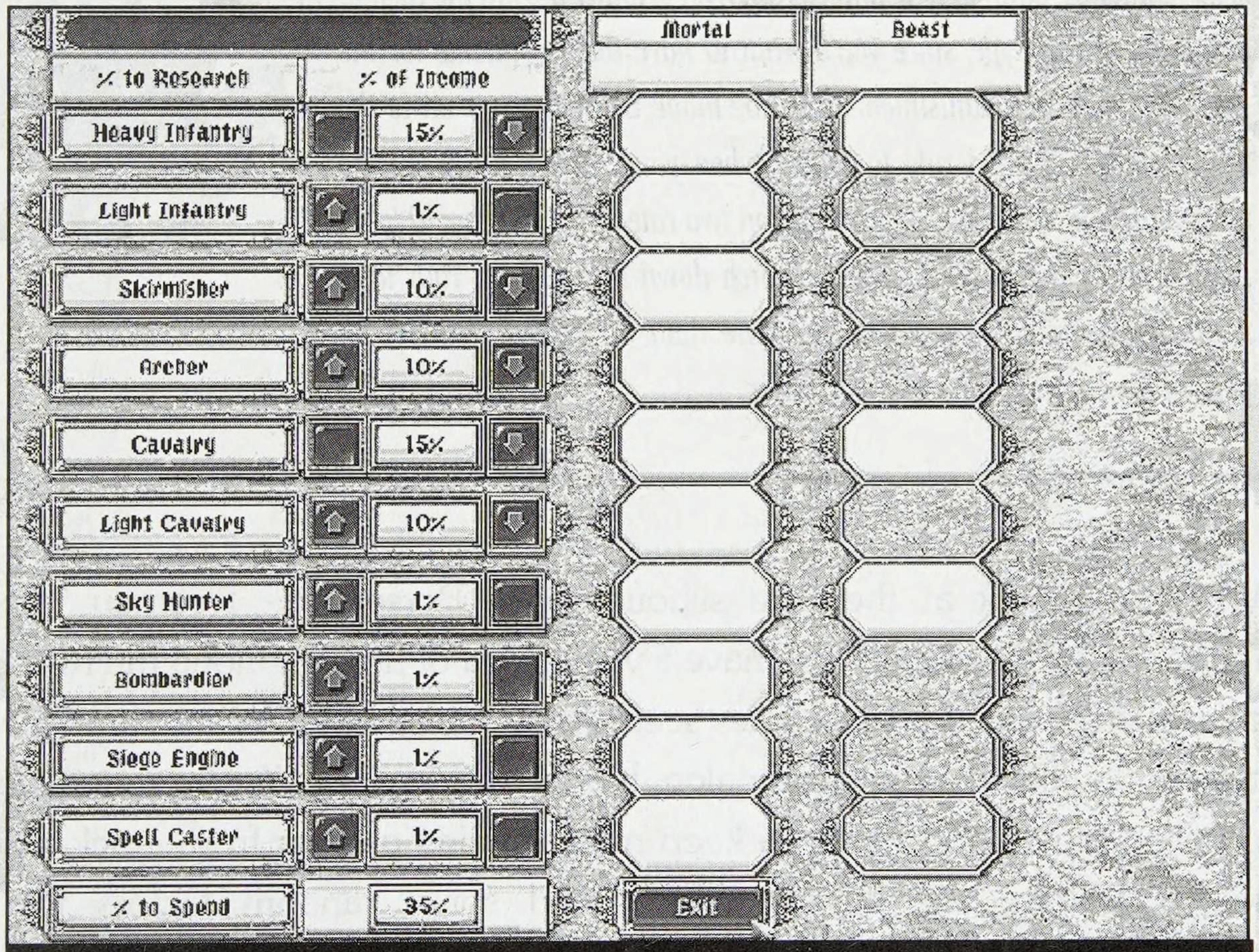
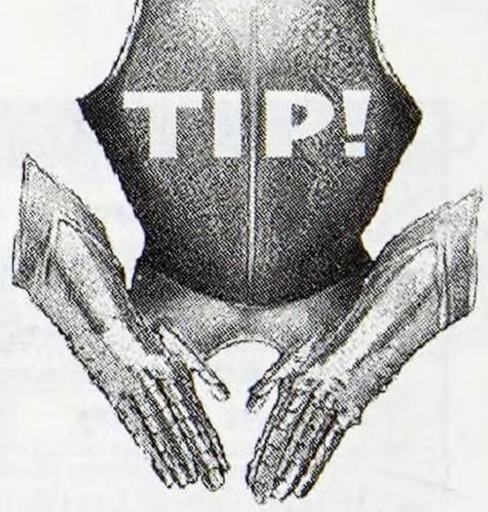


FIGURE 6-6.
This is a reasonable research approach to start the game, with plenty left over for unit purchases and upgrades.



After you win certain scenarios, your Army Maximum is increased. You need to balance gaining new unit classes with actually having the cash to buy units of that type, since you'll want to have them available for the upcoming scenario. Adjustments must be made before *you go on to the next scenario. A good rule to follow when your Army Max is due to immediately increase is to concentrate on two categories, placing 10 to 15 gold in each, and back all other research down to 5 or less. Your total research expenditure should be no more than 40 percent, leaving 60 percent for unit upgrades and purchases.*

When you look at the little silhouettes of Berserkers, Treemen, or Pit Cannons being developed, you have a vague idea of how far along the research is at a given point. If it sometimes seems that you spend the same amount on a class as you did in a prior campaign, but the results are *different* than before, you haven't lost your mind. To keep math-minded gamers from cracking the research system, the design team added some random factors to the development cycle. Due to these random factors (which will be explained below), the cost for each unit listed in Table 6-2 will be close to but not exactly the same as the number given. Table 6-2, "Research Thresholds," outlines the development cycle for each unit and its target cost.

Table 6-2: Research Thresholds

Category	Type	Grade	Unit	Target Cost
Hvy Infantry	Mortal	1	Swordsmen	32
Hvy Infantry	Magical	1	Treemen	34
Hvy Infantry	Beast	1	Barbarians	33
Hvy Infantry	Mech	1	None*	35
Hvy Infantry	Mortal	2	Pikemen	88
Hvy Infantry	Magical	2	Giant	92
Hvy Infantry	Beast	2	Werebears	90
Hvy Infantry	Mech	2	None*	96
Hvy Infantry	Mortal	3	Legionarii	160
Hvy Infantry	Magical	3	Earth Elemental	168
Hvy Infantry	Beast	3	Lionmen	164
Hvy Infantry	Mech	3	Iron Giant	176
Hvy Infantry	Mortal	4	Samurai	240
Hvy Infantry	Magical	4	Sandmen	252
Hvy Infantry	Beast	4	None*	246
Hvy Infantry	Mech	4	None*	264
Hvy Infantry	Mortal	5	Hvy Spearmen	290
Hvy Infantry	Magical	5	Monks of Meo	305
Hvy Infantry	Beast	5	Elephantmen	297
Hvy Infantry	Mech	5	Warlord Mechanus	319
Lt. Infantry	Mortal	1	Militia	30
Lt. Infantry	Mortal	2	Auxilia	84
Lt. Infantry	Mortal	3	Javelinmen	152
Lt. Infantry	Mortal	4	Ashiguers	228
Lt. Infantry	Mortal	5	Berserkers	275
Skirmisher	Mortal	1	Staff Slingers	29
Skirmisher	Mortal	2	Scouts	80
Skirmisher	Mortal	3	Foresters	144
Skirmisher	Mortal	4	Huntsmen	216
Skirmisher	Mortal	5	Trail Runners	260
Missile	Mortal	1	Longbowmen	34
Missile	Mortal	2	Pistoliers	92
Missile	Mortal	3	Gunners	168
Missile	Mortal	4	Fire Archers	252
Missile	Mortal	5	Royal Archers	305

Table 6-2: Research Thresholds (continued)

Category	Type	Grade	Unit	Target Cost
Cavalry	Mortal	1	Hvy Cavalry	37
Cavalry	Magical	1	Elf Chariots	39
Cavalry	Beast	1	Centaurs	38
Cavalry	Mech	1	Steamphont	41
Cavalry	Mortal	2	Chariots	100
Cavalry	Magical	2	Hydra	105
Cavalry	Beast	2	None*	102
Cavalry	Mech	2	None*	110
Cavalry	Mortal	3	Cataphractoi	184
Cavalry	Magical	3	Turtle Dragon	193
Cavalry	Beast	3	Ogre Centaurs	188
Cavalry	Mech	3	Rolling Fort	202
Cavalry	Mortal	4	Power Lancers	276
Cavalry	Magical	4	Ghost Riders	290
Cavalry	Beast	4	None*	283
Cavalry	Mech	4	None*	303
Cavalry	Mortal	5	Phoenix Knights	335
Cavalry	Magical	5	Nightmare	350
Cavalry	Beast	5	Centaur Knights	343
Cavalry	Mech	5	Thunder Tread	368
Lt. Cavalry	Mortal	1	Elf Knights	35
Lt. Cavalry	Mortal	2	Juns	96
Lt. Cavalry	Mortal	3	Riders of the Bow	176
Lt. Cavalry	Mortal	4	Spirit Riders	264
Lt. Cavalry	Mortal	5	Knight Gunners	319
Sky Hunter	Mortal	1	Green Dragon	40
Sky Hunter	Magical	1	Pegasi	42
Sky Hunter	Beast	1	Eagle Riders	41
Sky Hunter	Mech	1	Bronze Dragon	44
Sky Hunter	Mortal	2	Silver Dragons	110
Sky Hunter	Magical	2	Harpies	115
Sky Hunter	Beast	2	Eagles	112
Sky Hunter	Mech	2	None*	121
Sky Hunter	Mortal	3	Black Dragons	200
Sky Hunter	Magical	3	Silver Hawks	210

Table 6-2: Research Thresholds (continued)

Category	Type	Grade	Unit	Target Cost
Sky Hunter	Beast	3	Griffon Riders	205
Sky Hunter	Mech	3	Steam Hawks	220
Sky Hunter	Mortal	4	Dragon Knights	300
Sky Hunter	Magical	4	None*	315
Sky Hunter	Beast	4	None*	307
Sky Hunter	Mech	4	None*	330
Sky Hunter	Mortal	5	Lion Dragons	362
Sky Hunter	Magical	5	Phoenix Hawks	390
Sky Hunter	Beast	5	Ogre Griffons	371
Sky Hunter	Mech	5	Seekers	400
Bombardiers	Mortal	1	Roc Knights	38
Bombardiers	Magical	1	Balloon Riders	40
Bombardiers	Mech	1	Naphtha Droppers	42
Bombardiers	Mortal	2	None*	106
Bombardiers	Magical	2	None*	111
Bombardiers	Mech	2	None*	116
Bombardiers	Mortal	3	Dragon Riders	192
Bombardiers	Magical	3	Bicycle Riders	202
Bombardiers	Mech	3	Sky Splitter	211
Bombardiers	Mortal	4	None*	288
Bombardiers	Magical	4	None*	302
Bombardiers	Mech	4	None*	316
Bombardiers	Mortal	5	Pegasus Riders	348
Bombardiers	Magical	5	Cloud Ship	365
Bombardiers	Mech	5	Steam Castle	382
Siege Engine	Mortal	1	Ballistae	38
Siege Engine	Mech	1	Mercury Guns	42
Siege Engine	Mortal	2	Chain Guns	106
Siege Engine	Mech	2	None*	116
Siege Engine	Mortal	3	Cannon	192
Siege Engine	Mech	3	Steam Belchers	211
Siege Engine	Mortal	4	Mortars	288
Siege Engine	Mech	4	None*	316
Siege Engine	Mortal	5	Pit Cannon	348
Siege Engine	Mech	5	Wall Blasters	382

Table 6-2: Research Thresholds (continued)

Category	Type	Grade	Unit	Target Cost
Spellcaster	Mortal	1	Conjurers	32
Spellcaster	Mortal	2	Healers	88
Spellcaster	Mortal	3	Druids	160
Spellcaster	Mortal	4	Fire Wizards	240
Spellcaster	Mortal	5	Earthmasters	290

* You must pay these costs, even though there are no units of this type, in order to advance to the next level of research.

The formula for research works as follows:

1. **Start with 90.**
2. **Then it adds a random number from zero to 20.**
3. **If the character is Warlord Marcas, and he is researching Hvy/Lt Infantry, 15 is subtracted.**
4. **If the character is Marshal Calis, and he is researching Hvy/Lt Cavalry, 15 is subtracted.**
5. **If the character is Archmage Krell, researching Magical units, 15 is subtracted.**
6. **Multiply this number by the target cost and divide by 100.**
7. **The final result is the number needed to progress on to the next grade of that unit type.**

Here's an example of Krell researching Silver Hawks—a third-grade Sky Hunter: To begin, start with 90. Let's assume the maximum random number of 20. Since Krell gets a discount on Magical units, the equation would be: 90 + 20 - 15 = 95. For Krell, 200 is the highest total cost possible to research

this unit class. With a zero as the random number, the cost could be as low as 158. And if the Archmage were researching a Mortal, third-grade Sky Hunter, Black Dragons, his cost could be somewhat higher: 200 x (90% + 20%) = 200 x 110% = 220.

So, you can't simply compute the research to the last decimal point—sorry. Still, if you know your gold reserve, it's a fairly easy thing to estimate the cost. And that's all you really need to do, because *any overspending goes toward the next level of research* in that category. Since that means you can't waste research funding unless you overspend on the fifth grade in a category—and there's no deficit spending allowed—it's evident that *FG* is a fantasy in more ways than one...

THE DANGERS OF SPECIALIZATION

The phrase "survival of the fittest" seems appropriate to *Fantasy General*, as only the bravest and most persevering of souls will survive to overcome the Shadowlord. The other lesson of evolution, however, is that species that become too specialized lose their ability to adapt. Eventually, they perish.

It would seem that an obvious way to win in *Fantasy General* would be to throw all your resources into one branch of research. Marshal Calis could strive to have grade-5 Cavalry by the third continent, and roll right through Undead and Mech units alike. If this sounds too good to be true, it is. Because they wanted the campaign to remain fresh regardless of how many times it was replayed, the designers took steps to insure that no single strategy would always work.

If you become too "specialized" in one or two unit classes, the computer's units will adjust to compensate:

- *The computer checks to see what your* highest grade of research *is, regardless of unit type, within your army.*
- *The computer then examines your actual units taking part in the scenario, and calculates their "overall battlefield grade."*
- *Then the computer calculates the average between your highest research grade and overall battlefield grade to determine your "working grade."*
- *Then the computer determines your* average *research grade (as opposed to the* highest *class of research mentioned above).*
- *If the difference between your "working grade" and "average research grade" (ARG) is one or greater, then the experience levels of the enemy units* for that scenario *are upgraded by one Experience level for every number of difference.*
- *The AI also gets an additional 10 percent gold for each difference greater than one.*

Specialization is what I term a "good" cheat because it makes you play the game more "straight," as you would against a human opponent. The system forces you to build a more balanced army, but it doesn't limit you unduly: Over half of the game's 183 unit types may be built by the Good Guys.

An example of how Specialization works:

- *Marshal Calis throws the vast majority of his research efforts into Cavalry and Light Cavalry, since he buys these units at a discount.*
- *As Calis prepares to enter a new scenario on the second continent, he has just researched the third grade of both Cavalry and Light Cavalry. Having plenty of money, he builds two of each type (Riders of the Bow and Cataphractoi).*
- *His units on the battlefield are listed on page 81.*

2 Cataphractoi—grade 3
2 Riders of the Bow—grade 3
2 Juns—grade 2
2 Chariots—grade 2
1 Heavy Cavalry—grade 1
1 Eagle Rider—grade 1
1 Longbowmen—grade 1
1 Heavy Infantry—grade 1
1 Light Infantry—grade zero
1 Slinger—grade zero

✤ *Before the scenario begins, the computer figures whether Calis has fallen into "Specialization." The AI determines that the "overall battlefield grade" is 1.7 (or, 24/14 = 1.7).*
✤ *The highest research level attained is 3, and this is averaged with the "overall battlefield grade" of 1.7 to determine the "working average." Thus:(3 + 1.7)/2 = 2.35. The "working average" is 2.35, which computer rounds down to 2.*
✤ *The computer then compares the "working average" to Calis's "average research grade" (ARG), which would be calculated as follows:*

Heavy Infantry research = grade 1
Light Infantry = 0
Cavalry = 3
Light Cavalry = 3
Skirmishers = zero
Missile = 1
Sky Hunters = 1
Bombardiers = 0
Siege Engines = 0
Spellcasters = 0

The ARG is .9 (or, 9/10 = .9). Since the ARG is less than one, it is rounded down to zero. Thus, the difference between the "working average" (2) and the ARG (0) is 2 (or, 2 - 0 = 2).

- *This means that all enemy units bought during this scenario will be 2 Experience levels (*not *grades of unit) higher. So, for example, an Undead Cavalry would remain the same* type *of unit, but it would have 3 levels of experience, instead of the customary 1, as would all of the other enemy units faced in this scenario.*

The obvious question is: How could Calis have avoided this "Specialization disaster?" First, merely researching in one other area from zero to 1—such as successful research of Ballistae in Siege Engines, or Staff Slingers in Skirmishers—would have raised the ARG to 1 rather than zero, immediately correcting half the problem.

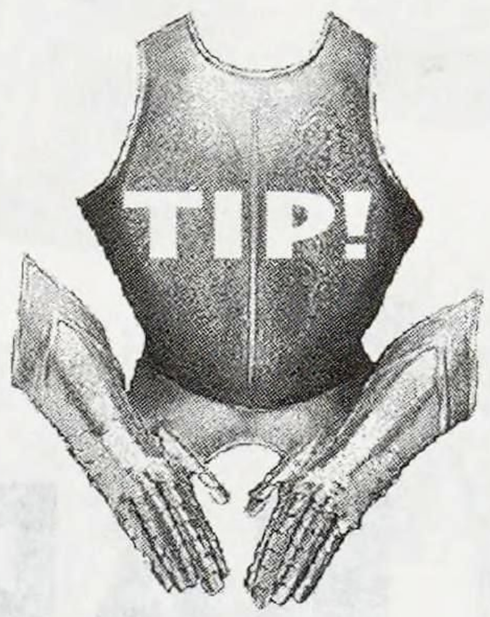
The other, more difficult task is to reduce the overall battlefield grade. You see, the problem in this obviously extreme example is that Calis didn't merely throw almost all of his research into just two types of units, he insisted on building those units without waiting until he could fill out his Army Maximum with more low-grade units to bring the average down.

If Calis were simply a bit more patient, and built only 1 Cataphractoi and 1 Rider of the Bow, he would have a lot of money left over, 164 gold to be exact. This cash could build 2 more Slingers, 2 Apprentices, 1 Hawk Rider, and 2 Catapults—all zero-grade units. This mix of units would sufficiently lower his overall battlefield grade, which would be calculated as listed on page 83.

1 Cataphractoi—grade 3
1 Riders of the Bow—grade 3
2 Juns—grade 2
2 Chariots—grade 2

1 Heavy Cavalry—grade 1
1 Eagle Rider—grade 1
1 Longbowmen—grade 1
1 Heavy Infantry—grade 1
1 Light Infantry—grade zero
3 Slinger—grade zero
2 Apprentice—grade zero
2 Catapults—grade zero
1 Hawk Rider—grade zero

Thus, his new "overall battlefield grade" is .94 (or, 18/19 = .94). And his new "working grade" is 1; or, (3 + .94)/2 = 1.9, which is rounded down to 1.



The easiest way to avoid the Specialization factor is to keep one or two low-grade units in your army, so that it brings down your working average, keeping it within acceptable levels. Mordra has the toughest time doing this due to her low Army Maximum. But if you buy Barbarians, they are excellent units and only grade 1. If worse comes to worst, keep a zero-grade Fire Beetle handy to kill Broken enemy units.

If our new ARG of 1 is used (where Calis researched Siege Engines to grade one), then the working grade and the ARG are both equal to 1, there is no difference, and the computer's units will *not* increase in experience levels.

The only way that Calis could get away with this finagling is to have an Army Maximum equal to 19. Mordra or Krell, with their smaller Army Maximums, could never have made this unbalanced research situation work. So, the best method is to allocate research where it will benefit your army overall, rather than overemphasizing one or two areas.

It seems the Shadowlord, in the tradition of Bad Guys, has spies everywhere. Still, you can overcome this advantage by being sensible and developing units in a more balanced fashion. Remember that the decimal average is rounded *down*, not up, so that with a little practice, you'll discover the proper tweaking needed to avoid the "Specialization Defense" kicking in.

CHAPTER 7

Cast Your Spell on Me

How to Use That ol' Black Magic to Your Advantage

The world of Aer is an odd mix of mundane Medievalism, Mech technology that seems like Magic, and Magic units that you can research like technology. If you ever doubt for a minute that *Fantasy General* deserves its name, just check out the variety of Spells. You may have units that turn Invisible, dispel the Undead, charm your enemies, or cast Fireballs. The very elements themselves are at the mercy of a great Sorcerer, as Earthquakes and Walking Woods defy the laws of Nature. Knowing how to best utilize the subtleties of Magic immediately puts you on the path to victory.

Hero Showcase

The lowly Sergeant and Corporal are rarely given their due, as they are often lost in the adulation surrounding the more famous Heroes of legend. Their stats are as follows:

Corporal

Hero	Melee	Armor	MR	Movement	Spotting	Spells
Corporal	15	15	75	3 (Open)	3	None
Sergeant	18	18	75	3 (Open)	3	None

Note: MR = Magic Resistance

Don't dismiss these brave warriors just because they lack Magic or special abilities. As Single Entities, they use the preferable Open movement rate, which makes up in some small measure for their low allotment of 3 Movement Points per turn. The Warlord begins with one Corporal and one Sergeant, neither of which counts toward his Army Maximum; and Heroes, unlike Volunteers, may stay with the army when it moves from one continent to another. Since, like other Heroes, neither of these fine soldiers ever suffers Kills, the only way you will ever lose them is to let them suffer 10 Wounds. Resting them occasionally is therefore a must, but you need not be timid: the high Armor ratings make these Heroes worthy adversaries for anything you meet on the first two continents. With Magic Items such as the Ring of Regeneration or the Amulet of Protection, they might even last until the final showdown with the Shadowlord.

Sergeant

THE ARCANE SCIENCE

Magic in *Fantasy General* can be divided into three main types: Spells, which are cast by a character, Hero, or Spellcaster unit; Magic Weapons, used to modify combat ratings, and Magic Artifacts, which grant spell-like abilities, usually within a limited range, to the user; and Special Abilities, included here because many of them are magical in nature.

Among the Champions you may portray in the game, Krell has the most obvious Magical talent, with four Spells at his disposal:

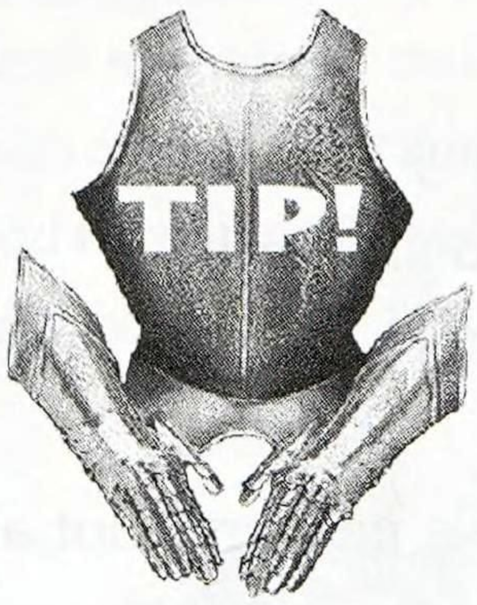
- *Fear: This may be used once per turn against a specific enemy unit. If not resisted, the unit is Broken.*
- *Fireball: This may be cast once per turn at an* enemy hex, *and it attacks all units in that hex at a strength of 6 + (continent # x 2). This spell may not be resisted.*
- *Weakness: This may be cast once per turn at an* enemy hex. *Units that resist successfully take 10 percent Wounds, failure to resist results in 50 percent Wounds.*
- *Whirlwind: This may be cast once per turn at an* enemy hex. *All enemy air units in the target hex are attacked at a strength of 10 + (continent # x 2). This spell may not be resisted.*

Keep in mind that Krell may cast only one of these Spells per turn, not all four. Even with this restriction, however, Krell gives your army anti-Air, anti-Melee, and what essentially counts as Missile capability all by himself.

Sorceress Mordra, on the other hand, lacks the mystical sophistication of her counterpart:

- *Heal Beasts: This may be cast* once per scenario only. *All Beast units are instantly Rested fully, even if they are in enemy ZOCs.*
- *Plague: This may be cast* once per scenario only, *and it attacks all enemy units on the battlefield other than Undead or Mech. Units who resist take from zero to 1 Wounds, those who fail to resist take from 1 to 3 Wounds.*

Mordra may cast either Plague *or* Heal Beasts—not both—only once during a scenario. Similarly, Marshal Calis may cast his Heal Spell only once during a scenario, but it heals *all* of his units (except Mech, even if you have captured the Engineer). Warlord Marcas has no magical ability, but his more down-to-earth advantages tend to make up for this apparent slight.



The habit many gamers fall into when Healing troops with Mordra's or Calis's Heal Spells is to cast at the beginning of the turn, to allow their damaged units full power, or they cast at the end of the turn, when their units can rest for defensive purposes. The problem with the former is that many units will be damaged by the end of the turn, negating the Healing process; the difficulty with the latter is that it leads you into passive play. The best way to use the Heal Spell is often during the middle of your turn. After you've made those bloody Cavalry charges and fought with Infantry to force enemies out of towns, then Heal. Not only will you benefit from your just-employed Heavy troops returning to peak strength, your formerly damaged units–who haven't yet moved this turn–can clean up on the crippled and retreating enemy.

A SPELL ONCE CAST...

Magic, true to its name, can do a bit of everything. Some Spells, like Krell's Whirlwind, have physical manifestation, attacking Armor. Others work like Missile units or even Siege Engines, attacking air and ground units alike. The most powerful Spells are cast not on a particular unit but on an entire hex, often affecting adjoining hexes as well. Some Spells may be resisted, some not—and when you consider that the average Magic resistance of Mortal units is a mere 75 percent, it helps to know what tricks the enemy may have up his insidious sleeve. Without further adieu, then, here is a complete spell listing, with additional information not available in the game manual.

Table 7-1: Dusty Tome of Spells

Spell	Type	Effect	Cast Upon
Animate Tree	Combat	25 Physical	Woods/Jungle/Swamp hex with enemy unit
Berserk	Combat	+5 Melee, -5 Armor	Adjacent friendly unit
Bless	Morale	+10% Morale, 25% of Wounds converted to Suppression	All adjacent friendly units
Banshee	Combat	If unit fails MR, it retreats	Enemy within 3 hexes
Dispel Undead	Special	If Undead unit fails MR, it is eliminated	Enemy within 3 hexes
Death Wounds	Combat	All Wounds unit causes to enemy become Kills	Adjacent friendly unit
Eagle Eye	Spotting	Visibility range = 10	Self
Earthquake	Morale (-30 to Morale if no resistance)	Morale check, -30 in any building/rough/mountain	Hex within 3 hexes plus adjacent
Armor	Defense	+5 Armor	Adjacent friendly unit
Force March	Movement	+2 MP	Self
Fireball	Combat	Attacks enemies in hex at 8, no resistance	Anywhere
Fire Storm		Attacks hex and all adjacent hexes at 9, no resistance	Enemy within 3 hexes
Heal	Rest	Cures all Wounds	Adjacent friendly unit
Invisibility	Spotting	Unit remains unseen until enemy moves adjacent	Self
Panic	Morale (If fails MR, then -30 Morale)	Units in or adjacent to hex make Morale check, failure means they are Broken	Enemy within 3 hexes
Pathmastery	Movement	Woods/Jungle/Swamp = Clear hexes	Adjacent friendly unit
Raise Dead	Replacement	Brings back random dead units	Self with no enemy next to caster
Restore Morale	Morale	Morale returns to normal/unit no longer Broken	Adjacent friendly unit
Whirlwind	Combat	All flyers suffer 12 point magic attack	In or adjacent to target hex

In the table above, note that "MR" means Magic Resistance. The Berserk Spell is different than Berserk Advantage (see Chapter 4), and Enchanted Armor is different than Magic Armor, a Magic item. Also, the Heal Spell is not the same as Marshal Calis's Heal Spell.

Of the Spells available, Death Wounds is indispensable to victory because it amplifies the already massive killing power of Melee units. It is particularly useful when used with Barbarians or Heavy Cavalry on the first two continents, as they can crush even the best Shadow units—especially if you've made sure to Disrupt them first with Skirmishers and Light Cavalry.

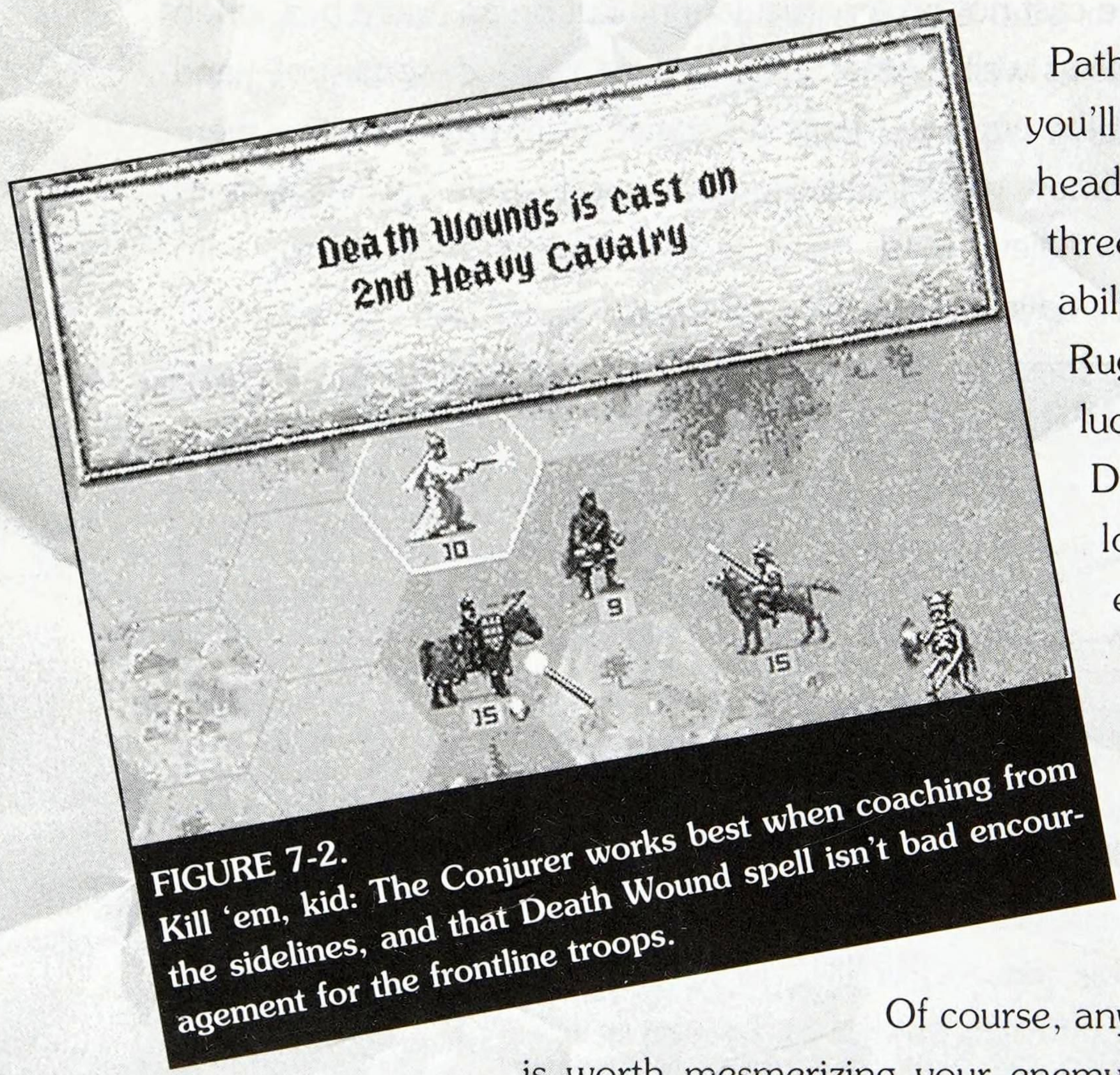


FIGURE 7-2.
Kill 'em, kid: The Conjurer works best when coaching from the sidelines, and that Death Wound spell isn't bad encouragement for the frontline troops.

Pathmastery is also crucial; you'll find it hard to make headway on continents three and four without this ability to waltz through Rugged terrain. If you are lucky enough to get it, Dispel Undead goes a long way toward evening out the odds versus those tough Skeleton Archers. It also saves you a lot of dough you'd otherwise spend on Sky Hunters.

Of course, any Spell that you receive is worth mesmerizing your enemy with, especially since you gain several of them for free during the course of the game. We'll look at the specific Magic enhancements you pick up in the succeeding chapters, following the action on each continent during the campaign. Meanwhile, let's move on to Magic Items, and see how they differ from Spells.

Keep in mind that the aggressive AI targets units it considers the greatest threat. If you purchase three Conjurers, and run around the battlefield casting Death Wounds on every Heavy Cavalry and Infantry unit in sight, the AI will throw caution to the winds and send Sky Hunters galore after both your top Melee units and Mages alike. You can attempt to set a trap for them in this case, but my advice is to avoid overdoing the Death Wound bit altogether. Remember the "Specialization Defense" factor, and temper your tactics with common sense.

ENCHANTED, I'M SURE

Magic Weapons and Artifacts are similar, in that they enhance specific abilities of your own units or detract from those of your enemies. Because of this, Table 7-2 lists all of these items together for easy reference, providing additional information not covered in the rules manual.

Table 7-2: Magic Items

Magical Item	Type	Effect	Used Upon
Amulet of Blessings	Combat/Morale	+10 Morale, 25% chance to convert Wounds to Morale loss	Self
Amulet of Protection	Combat	50% chance to convert Wounds to Morale loss	Self
Amulet of Resistance	Magic Defense	MR + = 150%	Self
Armor	Defense	+3 Armor	Self
Axe	Combat	+3 Melee	Adjacent enemy
Bow	Ranged	+2 Missile, or Missile = 5	Adjacent enemy
Cloak of Hiding	Spotting	Makes unit invisible	Self
Crossbow	Ranged	+4 Missile, or Missile = 8	Adjacent enemy
Eagle-Eye Stone	Spotting	See two hexes farther	Self
Javelin	Skirmish	+4 Skirmish, or Skirmish = 10	Adjacent enemy
Rapid Boots	Movement	+1 Movement	Self
Ring of Free Move	Movement	All hexes = 1 MP	Self
Ring of Regeneration	Rest	Regenerates one Wound per turn	Self
Skull of Crang	Hits	Unit loses half remaining Life as Wounds	Enemy within 3 hexes
Shield	Defense	+2 Armor	Self
Sling	Skirmish	+2 Skirmish, or Skirmish = 4	Adjacent enemy
Staff of Confusion	Movement	Unit loses turn by failing MR	Enemy within 3 hexes
Staff of Fatigue	Move/Combat	Unit is -1 MP, -2 Armor, -2 Melee	Enemy within 3 hexes
Staff of Fireballs	Combat	Attacks enemies in hex at 8, no resistance	Enemy within 3 hexes
Staff of Healing	Rest	Heals all Wounds (only)	Adjacent unit
Staff Sling	Skirmish	+3 Skirmish, or Skirmish = 7	Adjacent enemy
Staff of Winds	Air	Attack = 12 on Air in or adjacent to hex	Enemy within 3 hexes
Storm Staff	Ranged	Missile Attack = 8 on Ground, 24 on Air	Enemy within 3 hexes
Sword	Combat	+2 Melee	Adjacent enemy
Sword of Death	Combat	All Wounds inflicted become Kills	Adjacent enemy
Wand of Fireballs	Combat	Fireball Attack = 8	Adjacent enemy hexes within 3
Wand of Sickness	Hits	Unit failing MR loses half remaining Life as Wounds	Enemy within 3 hexes

Magic Items allow for a lot of flexibility in tactics. Remember the ambush we set up in Chapter 5 with the Invisible Scout unit? If the Scout also possessed a Wand of Sickness or a Staff of Confusion, he could create Rambo-like mayhem behind enemy lines, then vanish into the underbrush, where the Heavy enemy units could scarcely follow.

Similarly, a Staff of Winds is a great help *even* if you have Krell; it saves him from having to cast a Whirlwind spell *every* turn. The Storm Staff and Staff of Winds should be combined with Archers to form an anti-Air counterattack capability *even* an *Aegis* captain would be proud of: 12 (Winds) + 24 (Storm) = 36 Air attack factors in the target hex, and 12 for the surrounding hexes; what remains of the enemy should be easy pickings for the Archers and any Sky Hunters nearby.

At the beginning of the campaign, each Champion has a Magic Item suited to his or her army:

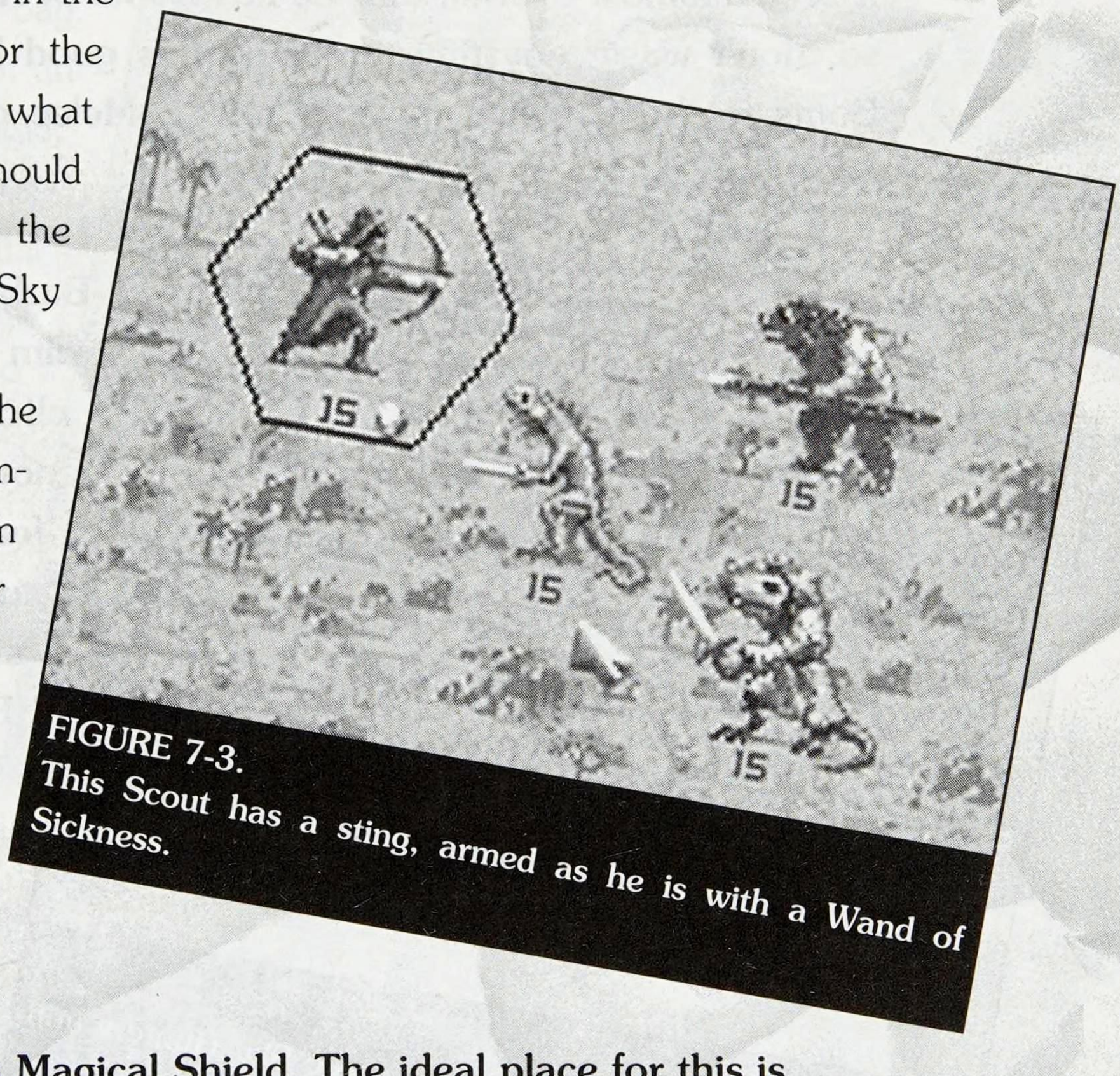


FIGURE 7-3.
This Scout has a sting, armed as he is with a Wand of Sickness.

1. Marshal Calis has a Magical Shield. The ideal place for this is with the Heavy Cavalry, especially since you can't build another until you research grade 1 Cavalry.
2. Archmage Krell is blessed with a Wand of Fireballs. The safe thing is to give it to an Infantry unit. Greater potential comes from giving the Wand to the Archer unit. The idea is that the Archer will attack with the Wand—certainly more potent than the minimal attack of this grade zero unit—and once the enemy unit retreats, an Infantry jumps into the vacated

spot; it is then covered by the Archer's defensive fire (see Figure 7-5). If the Archer survives long enough for upgrades and experience to set in, this tactic will prove invaluable.

3. Warlord Marcas has an embarrassment of riches at the game's start; it seems almost overkill that he has Boots of Rapid Movement. Even so, don't waste any time breaking this good leather in. Assign the Boots to the Sergeant, so that his 18 Melee can get "up front and personal" quickly, to the enemy's lament.

FIGURE 7-4.
The Staff of Winds scatters these enemy Sky Hunters and lets Mordra reserve the threat of the Plague for later.

4. Mordra has the Barbarian, and awarding him the Magic Sword is cliché but effective nonetheless. If you are feeling a little adventurous, try giving the sword to the Fire Beetles. If the idea bothers you as being somehow incongruous (where, after all, are the Beetles going to hold the sword?), think for a second: these are insects pumped up with magic steroids—how serious do you need to be?

YOU'RE SO SPECIAL

Certain characters or units are blessed with Special Abilities; which are a very mixed bag, comprised as they are of an amalgamation of Magic, Heroic, and Combat enhancements. The manual is pretty clear on how these abilities work, so these are listed here mainly for the sake of completeness, with a few more specifics on numbers where applicable.

FIGURE 7-5.
If you've always suspected that Fantasy Archers are all secretly pyromaniacs, test your theory by giving them the Wand of Fireballs, and watch some Shadow fur fly.

- *Battle Lust: The Good (Barbarians, Werebears), the Bad (Shadows, Knights of Fire), and the Ugly (Ogre Knights, Ratmen) possess this ability, which gives them a +4 Melee. They never break, and they don't suffer adverse Armor modifiers like Berserk units.*
- *Berserker: No, these aren't the planet-killing machines of science-fiction writer Frederick Pohl's universe, but they're still formidable opponents. Like units in Battle Lust, Berserkers never retreat or break. They have a +2 Melee, but a -2 to Armor for Missile and Melee defense.*

- *Hero: These great figures of legend inspire your men so that units gain +10 Morale for each Hero they are adjacent to. Heroes never suffer Kills, and any Wounds do not reduce their number of attacks, which always equal 10.*
- *Heroic: Perhaps taking their cue from Malric, Sir Kalador, and other brave champions, units with this ability ignore retreat—in some cases, not a good thing—and damage does not decrease their number of attacks.*
- *Immune to Magic: This is exactly what it sounds like; no exceptions.*
- *Mystic: This is a rather exotic way of saying that a unit with this ability has a +4 to their Primary attack;*
- *Negate Cavalry Bonus: In other words, build Pikes (and Spears and Legions), Young Man! (or Woman!)*
- *Regeneration: A very nice ability, this allows recovery of one Wound per turn, while maintaining all normal activity. For whatever reason, Trolls have this, but Hydras don't. Whatever would Perseus say?*
- *Single Entity: Remember what I said about completeness? Such a being only suffers Wounds, not Kills.*
- *Undead: They may be banished with the Dispel Undead Spell, but being already dead, they are immune to Plague.*
- *Vulnerable to Magic: When attacked by Magic, this unit is -3 to Armor.*
- *Vulnerable to Mechanical: When attacked by Mech, this unit is -4 to Armor.*

Using Magic is really a matter of placing the right items with the right units, and not becoming so dependent on Spells that you lose track of your army's

strengths. Spells should enhance your troops, allowing them to survive longer, build up more experience, take out more enemies, and move more quickly to secure objectives.

And now, let's move on to the campaign itself: The liberation of Keldonia!

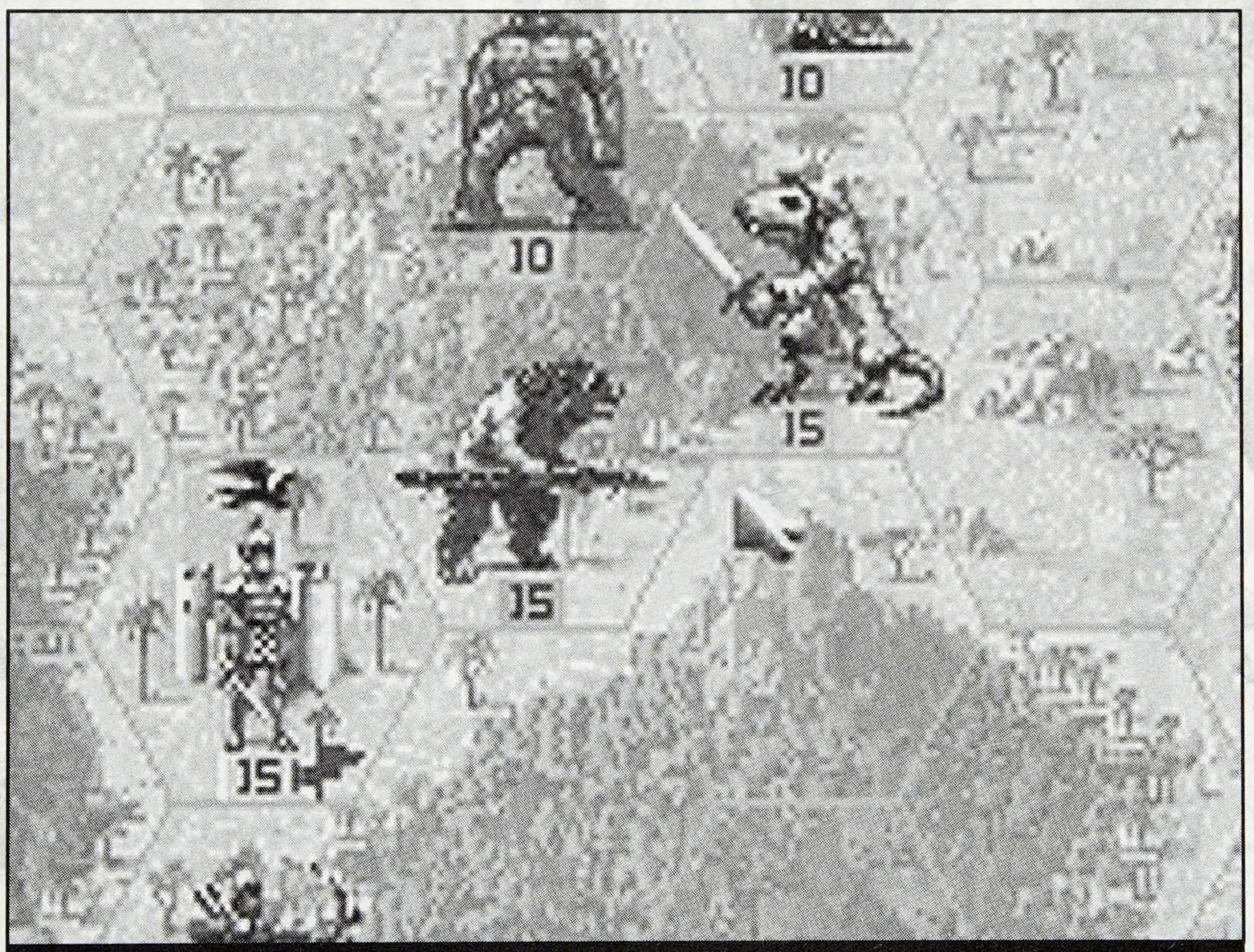
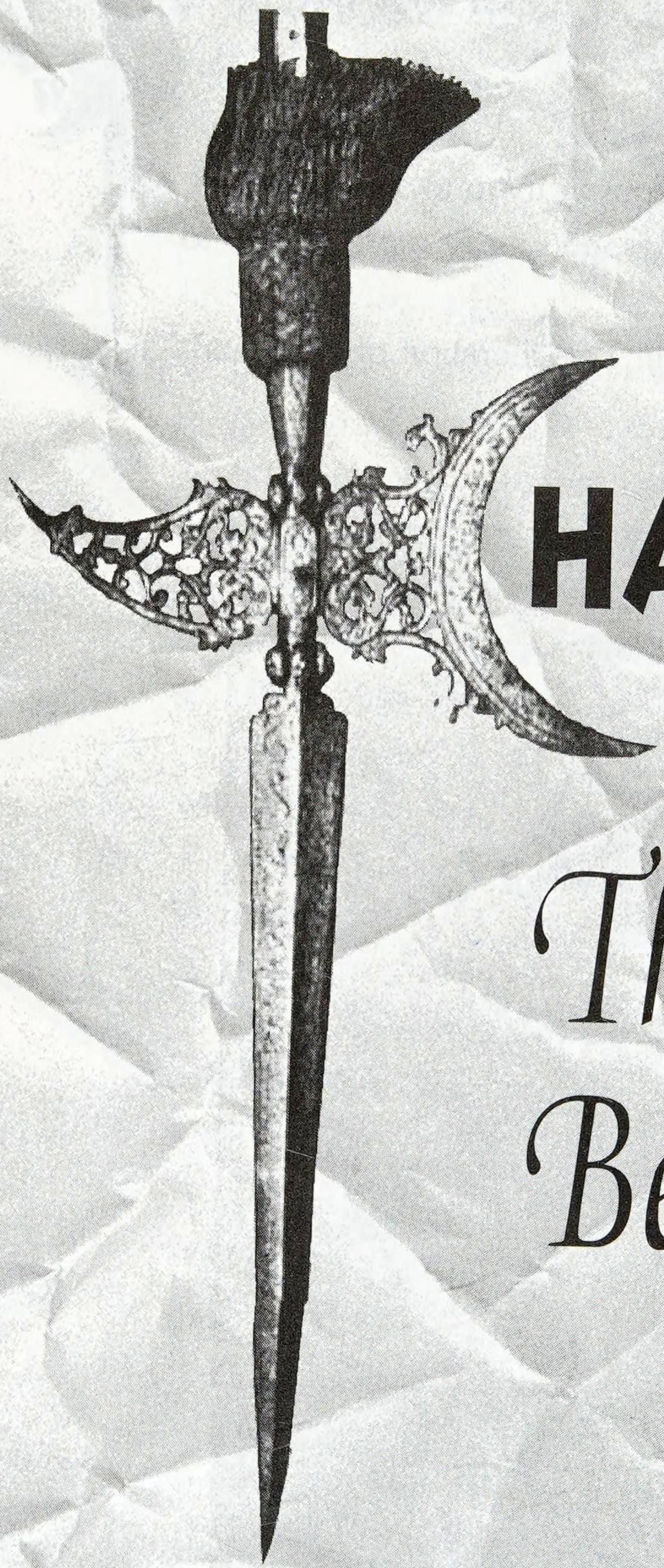


FIGURE 7-6.
If you can keep them out of the clutches of Sky Hunters, Werebears are excellent units to form the core of Mordra's army, with their high Melee, Armor, and Battle Lust skill.



CHAPTER 8

The Campaign Begins

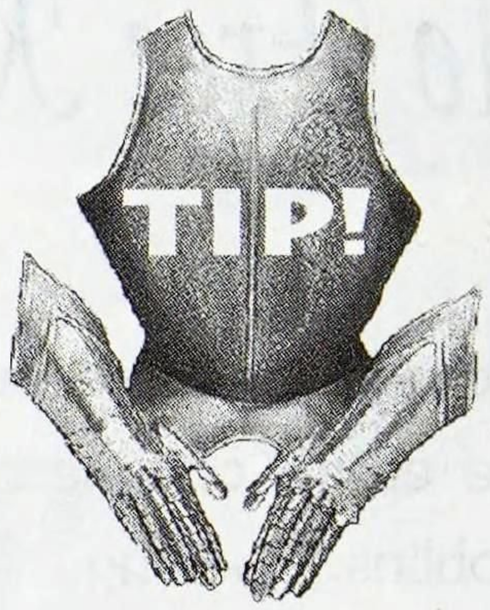
To Free Keldonia

From your base, you survey the hills and valleys of Keldonia. Once peaceful, the entire continent is now a breeding ground for Orcs, a playground for Goblins. Looking over your small army, barely larger than a decent-sized division, you wonder if it is up to the task. Slight Elf-folk stand silently, their calm faces belied by the tightness with which they clutch their bows. Heavily-armored horses snort impatiently, knowing that if the battle goes well, they will receive extra grain for dinner. The assembled soldiers meet your gaze with unflinching courage, and you sense their belief in you, in each other, and in the cause that binds you together. Finally, with a sweep of your arm so grandiose that you are embarrassed to speak of it later, you give the signal to move into battle. The liberation of Keldonia has finally begun.

FAREACH VALLEY

Your main advantage is that Keldonia is held by the forces of the lazy Orc King Dragga. As a result, the computer has fewer resources here than on any of the other continents. This opening scenario, in particular, is quite simple to win for anyone, regardless of their level of strategy gaming experience.

In nearly all of the scenarios fought in Keldonia, Shadow Troops will offer to surrender when they have taken 80 percent losses. Both here and in the battle of the Scarlet Plain, they will give up when they have one unit remaining. Unless you are out of time—on, say, the last one or two turns—you should not accept the surrender, as your forces are quite capable of eliminating all enemy units. Every loss the enemy takes adds to your experience, so milk this "on the job training" until it's dry, at least on this continent.



When you choose where to fight your first battle, you must select either the Fareach Valley or the Scarlet Plain. When you win either of these battles, Dragga's strategic position on the continent is thereby rendered untenable, resulting in his retreat to Hoaroot Forest–so that the battle you didn't choose is no longer available. If you are a novice strategy gamer, you should begin with Fareach Valley because this scenario allows you to learn the mechanics and increases your units' experience with little risk of failure.

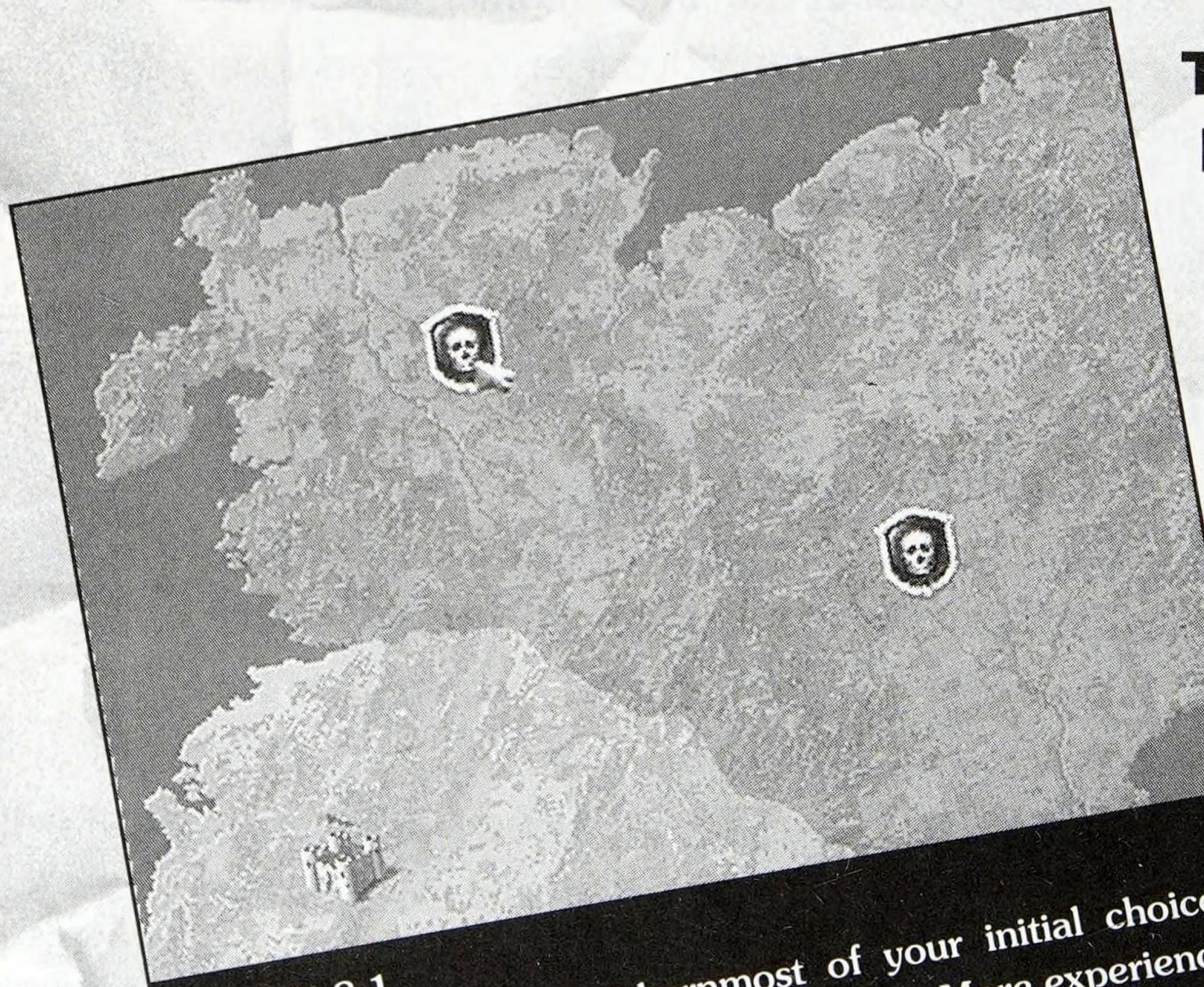


FIGURE 8-1.
Fareach Valley, the northernmost of your initial choices, offers less of a learning curve for novices. More experienced generals will find greater rewards by starting with the battle of the Scarlet Plain.

TAKE THE FIRST STEP

You should experiment with setting up your newly purchased units, maximizing their mobility without putting them in too much danger. If you aren't comfortable with how to do this, refer back to Chapter 3 (especially Figures 3-8 and 3-9).

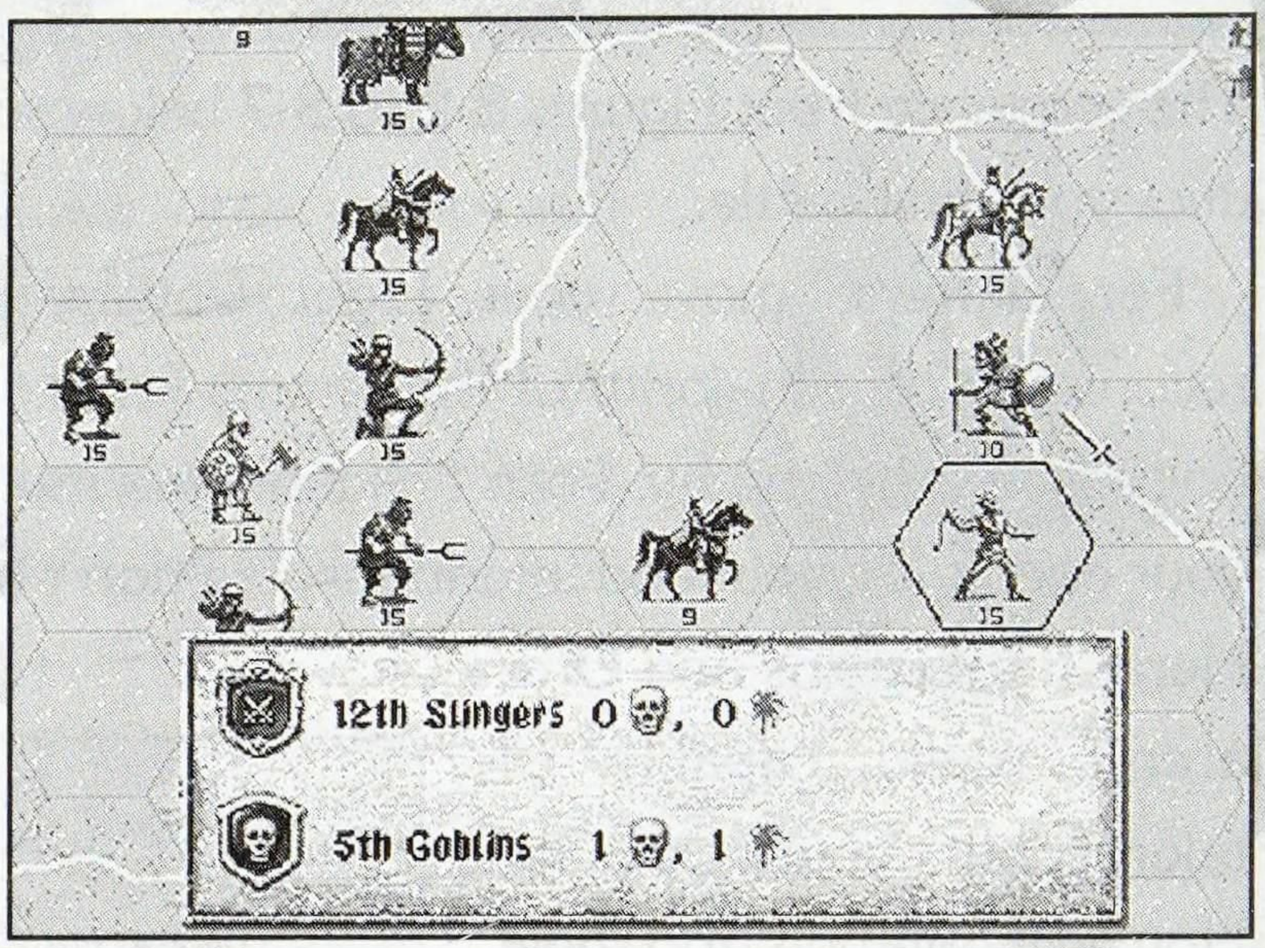
The sequence from Figures 8-2 to 8-7 below shows one method of how to conduct your first battle.

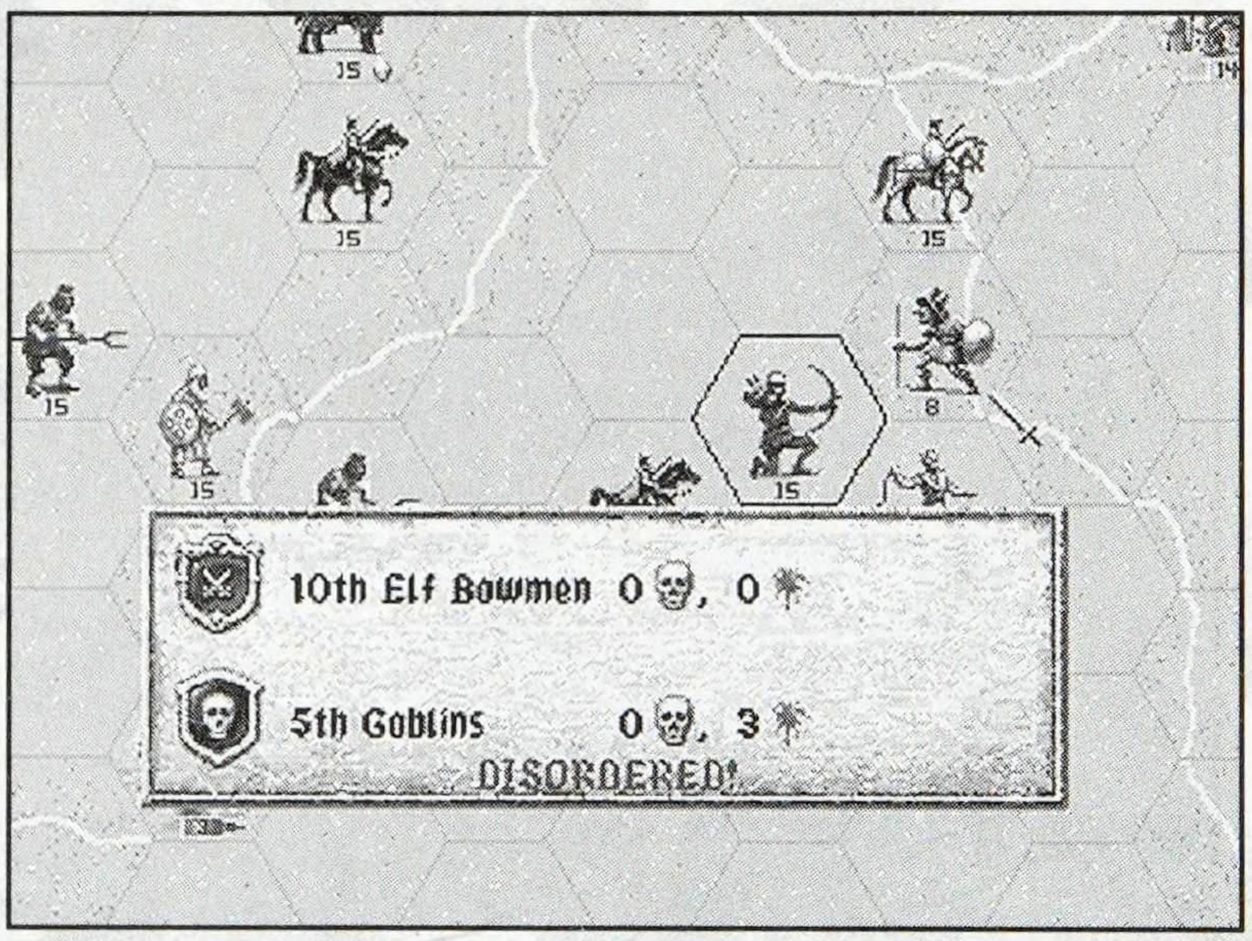
For starters, move your Light Cavalry near the Standing Stones to reconnoiter the majority of the enemy force. The other troops follow, but do not engage the enemy. I can't caution you too much: It's important to discover your enemy's layout and intentions, but don't be reckless with your recon units.

Here, the Goblins and Orcs aren't really capable of taking out your Cavalry. However, getting too bold around Undead Cavalry or Lionmen would no doubt result in you being forced to buy some new horsemen.

FIGURE 8-2.
Yes, sir, you're right—Goblins are even uglier up close.

A good example of harassment, the Skirmisher (Figure 8-3) attacks the enemy Goblin, causing two losses *with no return fire*. Archers follow-up (Figure 8-4), causing three more losses, again with no return fire. Because the Goblin, if allowed to retreat, might be able to heal its Wounds, the Heavy Cavalry is sent in (Figure 8-5) to assure the enemy unit's destruction. This is not a waste of a good unit, since it will increase the Heavy Cavalry's experience. Also, notice that the Heavy Cavalry is in a good position to attack the Goblin-held town to the east.





FIGURES 8-3, 8-4, 8-5. First Kill: The Goblin probably wishes he'd stuck to stealing cows, as (from top to bottom) he is attacked by a Skirmisher and an Archer and then is finally wiped out by a Heavy Cavalry.

Meanwhile, the other Elf Archers and Light Infantry repeat the process to the north (Figure 8-6). Since there isn't another Heavy Cavalry to complete the process this turn, one Light Infantry, held in reserve, moves next to the Goblin, *without attacking it,* to keep it from resting.

Once you get the hang of gameplay, it's easy to eliminate isolated or crippled enemy units. The real challenge is to develop a strategy that links those tactical sequences together. Think of it as a military billiards game, where each shot leads logically to the next. Sure, the randomness inherent in the game may play havoc with your best-laid strategies at times, but don't despair. As you learn and eventually master how to attack and defend, you come to realize that the art of military science is the imposition of order on the ever-changing conditions of the battlefield.

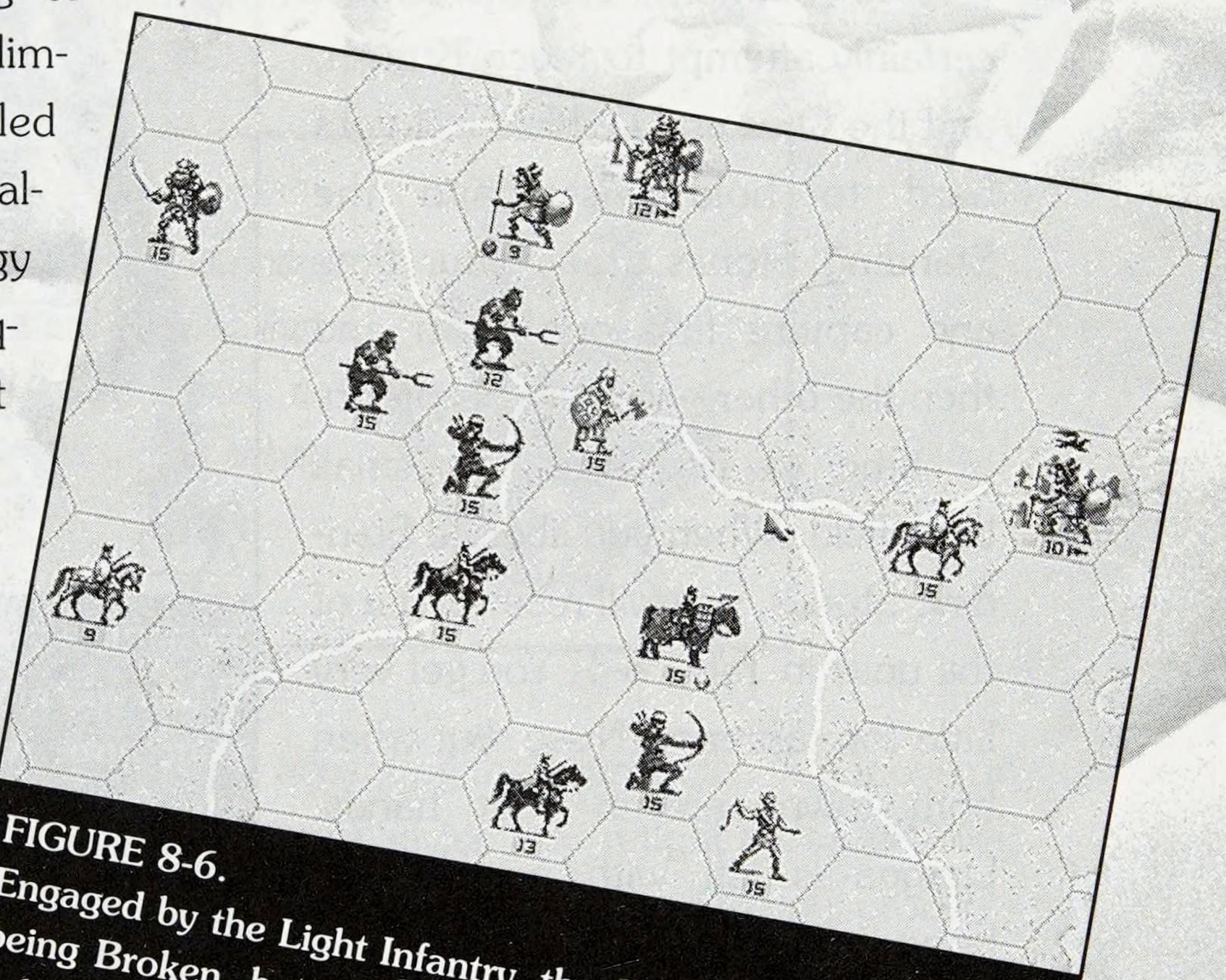


FIGURE 8-6.
Engaged by the Light Infantry, the Goblin may recover from being Broken, but it can't get more than 1 Life point back unless he moves away, essentially wasting his turn.

Here, a look at the overall position (Figure 8-7) shows a solid defensive deployment, with the Archers supporting most of the front line troops. Moreover, the units, particularly the Heavy Cavalry, are poised like a coiled spring, ready to strike both north and east. Finally, note how the Cavalry to the west effectively screens the Orc unit opposite from reaching the friendly town of Kurush.

Similar tactics will take out the Orc and Goblin units to the north, and the other Goblin to the east. Now Dragga (the AI) is left with very few options. He will almost certainly attempt to reach Kurush, and the Orcs and Goblins will fight hard to hold Nisse and the Standing Stones. Take your time and capture first one town and then the other—ten turns is *plenty* of time to negotiate this small battlefield. When you liberate Standing Stones, you will receive one of the units in Table 8-1. You get very little for capturing Nisse, but when both towns are in your hands, Dragga is left with nowhere to bring in newly built troops.

FIGURE 8-7.
When you move and attack with units during your turn, remember the "Billiards rule"—one shot sets up another. You want to have a cohesive force assembled whenever possible, like the one shown here, instead of units scattered all over the battlefield.

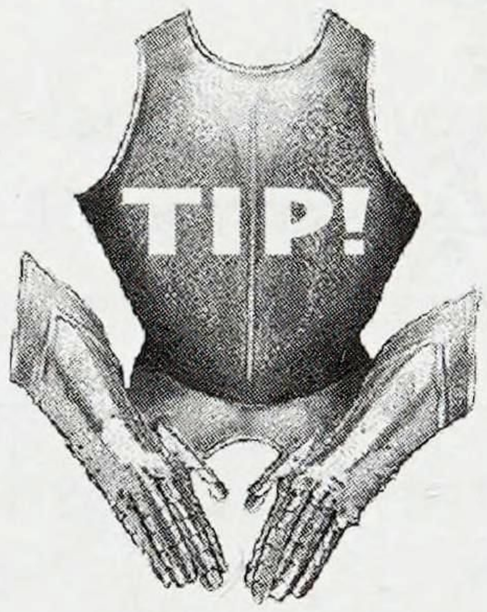
Table 8-1:
Standing Stones Rewards

Unit	Type	Chance to Receive
Peasants	Lt. Infantry	20%
Warband	Hvy. Infantry	20%
Squires	Cavalry	20%
Lt. Cavalry	Lt. Cavalry	20%
Apprentices	Spellcaster	20%

All of these units are grade zero, and you get only one of them (which is why the total chance adds up to 100 percent). A nice touch is that the unit you recruit doesn't simply pop up without an explanation. The Peasants are "huddled in the shadows," the band of Squires "rides up with bright banners," and so

forth, adding color to the game. By the way, don't expect to enjoy your newfound friends for long. Keep in mind that Volunteers head home for the holidays (or to bring in the crops, or whatever) whenever your campaign takes you to a new continent. At the risk of sounding callous, don't be bashful about throwing your Volunteer units into the most dangerous situations.

Even if the computer offers to surrender, make sure you've received the unit from Standing Stones; the computer shows no mercy if you end the battle without picking up any Volunteers.



After either eliminating all enemy units or accepting their surrender, you move on to Hoaroot Forest. If you lost any units here, my advice is to refight Fareach Valley until you can achieve a clear and overwhelming victory; otherwise you probably won't survive long if you should happen to make it to the second continent.

THE SCARLET PLAIN

The town of Runcia begins the scenario in your possession, and it is fairly simple to defend. As sort of a teaser to the aggressive play you'll face later, a single Goblin will usually try to circle between Runcia and your forces. If by some chance you get concerned, a mere Skirmisher or Light Cavalry is sufficient to hold the town.

As in Fareach Valley, you have ten turns to achieve your objectives: capture the town of Fellstan and cleanse the Shrine of Hespae of enemy forces. This is a more interesting scenario than Fareach, but still quite simple to win. Remember

that the opening battles are deliberately designed to hone your tactical skills, not to be a great test of them.

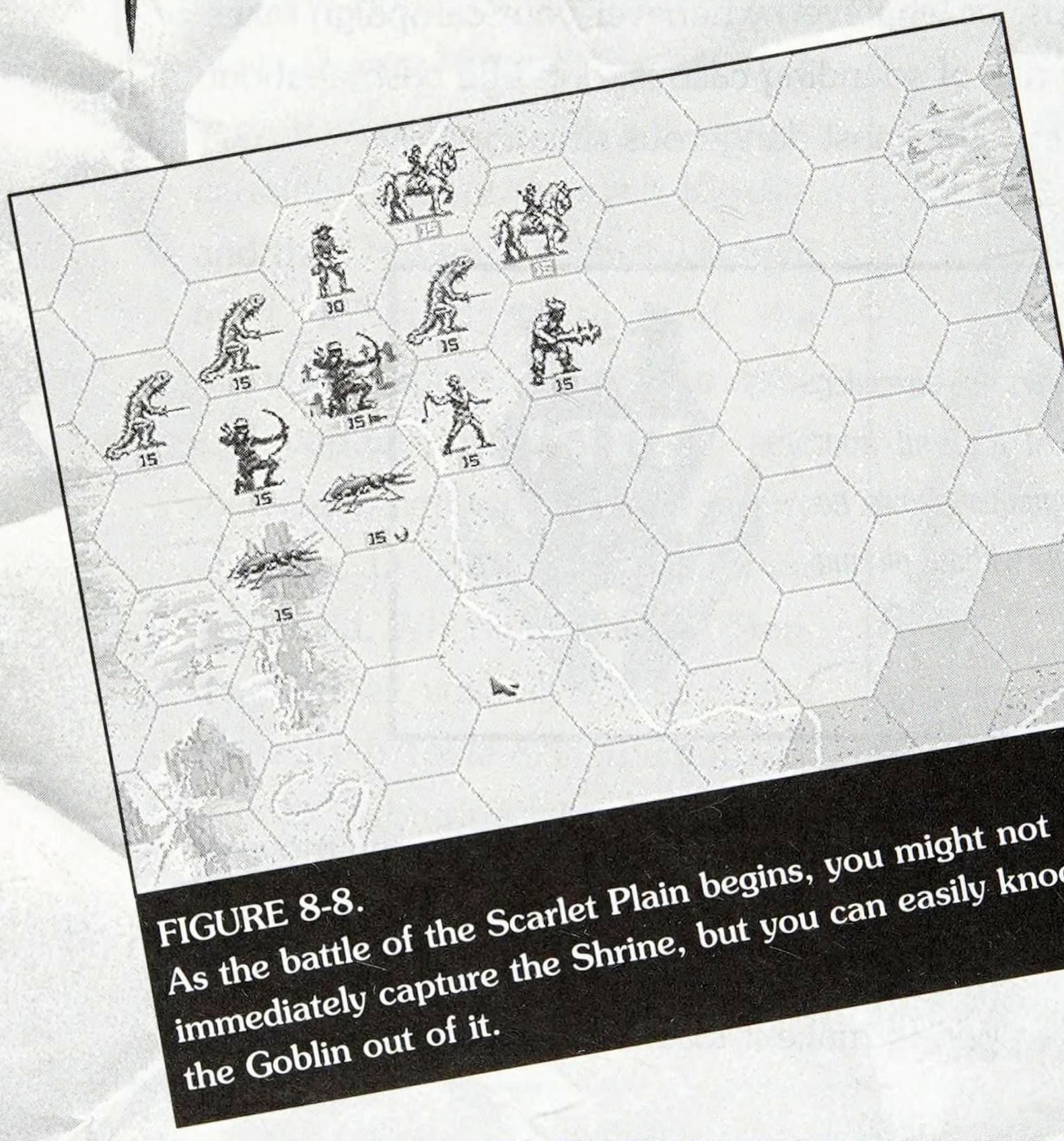


FIGURE 8-8.
As the battle of the Scarlet Plain begins, you might not immediately capture the Shrine, but you can easily knock the Goblin out of it.

Figure 8-8 shows a typical setup for Mordra's army, with the Fire Beetles ready to rampage across the landscape like ants on a picnic basket.

When you capture the Shrine of Hespae, you gain one of the following (all units are grade zero, as before):

Table 8-2: Shrine of Hespae Rewards

Unit	Type	Chance to Receive
Peasants	Lt. Infantry	20%
Warband	Hvy. Infantry	20%
Squires	Cavalry	20%
Lt. Cavalry	Lt. Cavalry	20%
Apprentices	Spellcaster	20%

Using the tactics you've learned so far, eliminating the enemy units should be fairly routine. Veterans will find that once they understand the system, this battle can be won in ten minutes or less. Hoaroot Forest, the next battle, is a slightly greater challenge.

HOAROOT FOREST

After winning at either Fareach Valley or the Scarlet Plain, you receive 100 gold and a random auxiliary unit (see Table 8-3). Remember, this is a Volunteer unit that will leave your army when you journey to the next continent:

Table 8-3: Chance of Volunteers Joining

Unit	Type	Marcas	Calis	Krell	Mordra
Peasants	Lt. Infantry	40%	40%	40%	40%
Warbands	Hvy. Infantry	15%	10%	15%	10%
Slingers	Skirmish	15%	10%	5%	10%
Lizardmen	Hvy. Infantry	5%	5%	10%	15%
Elf Bowman	Archer	10%	15%	15%	5%
Squire	Cavalry	10%	15%	5%	5%
Harpy	Sky Hunter	5%	5%	10%	15%

What type of unit you receive obviously shapes your strategy, but don't use free units as a crutch. Mordra, if she is lucky enough to get a Sky Hunter Volunteer, shouldn't depend on summoning another Air unit each battle. A better strategy is to actually accelerate development in that area, because of two things:

1. **The AI will expect you to have the units, and it will build units of its own to counteract this new threat—in this case, more Sky Hunters.**
2. **You will become accustomed to having the units yourself, especially if they are units with excellent mobility—like Sky Hunters.**

When preparing your army prior to the next battle, research should stay at the same levels as before. Your goal should be to reach grade-1 in at least one unit class after winning the Battle of Hoaroot Forest, since your Army Maximum will increase afterward.

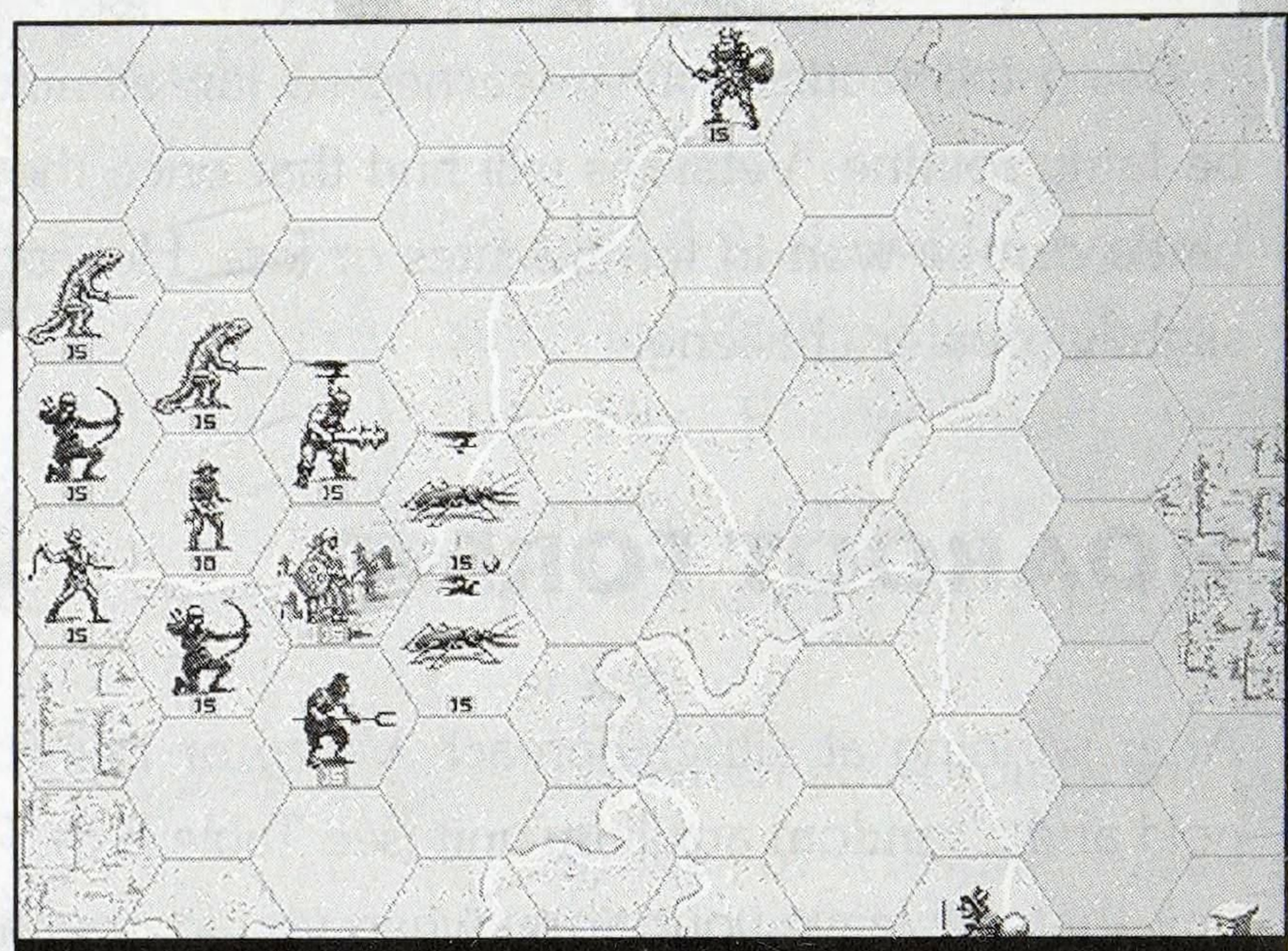
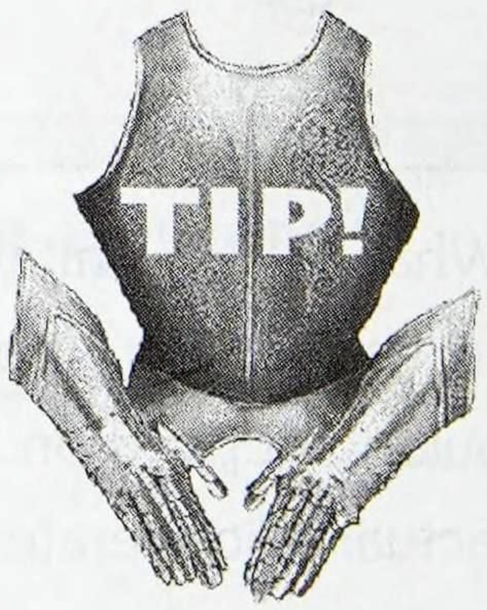


FIGURE 8-9.
Beasts and Mortals alike are ready to be unleashed upon the enemy.

An opening setup similar to Figure 8-9 allows you to engage the enemy all across the line right, from the first turn. Just make sure to attack the enemy Slave Archer with your Fire Beetle, as Figures 8-10A and 8-10B illustrate, before you take on the Orc Infantry.

The units of the enemy have an undeniable flair, provided you don't take everything too seriously. The Slave Archers you meet in the Scarlet Plain, for example, are sheer Hollywood–they remind me of Charlton Heston and those other Judean slaves, malnourished yet surprisingly well-trained, rowing their hearts out in the movie Ben Hur. Also, I guess I've read too much Tolkien to ever really believe that an Orc could successfully draw a bow (I imagine them eating the bow instead). But the Orc Archer units you meet later are worthy adversaries, so don't let your biases (or mine) blind you to the dangers your enemies pose.



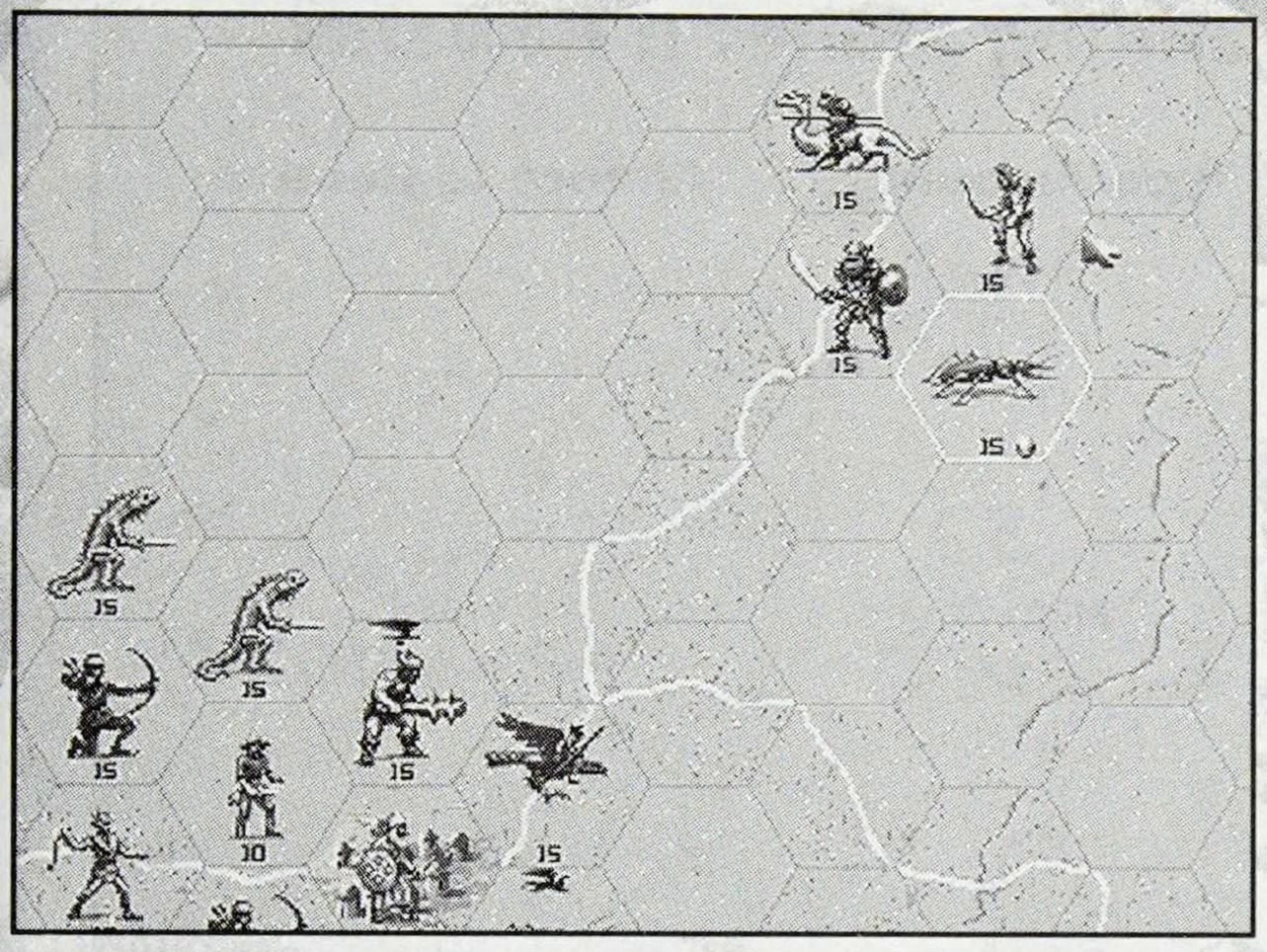
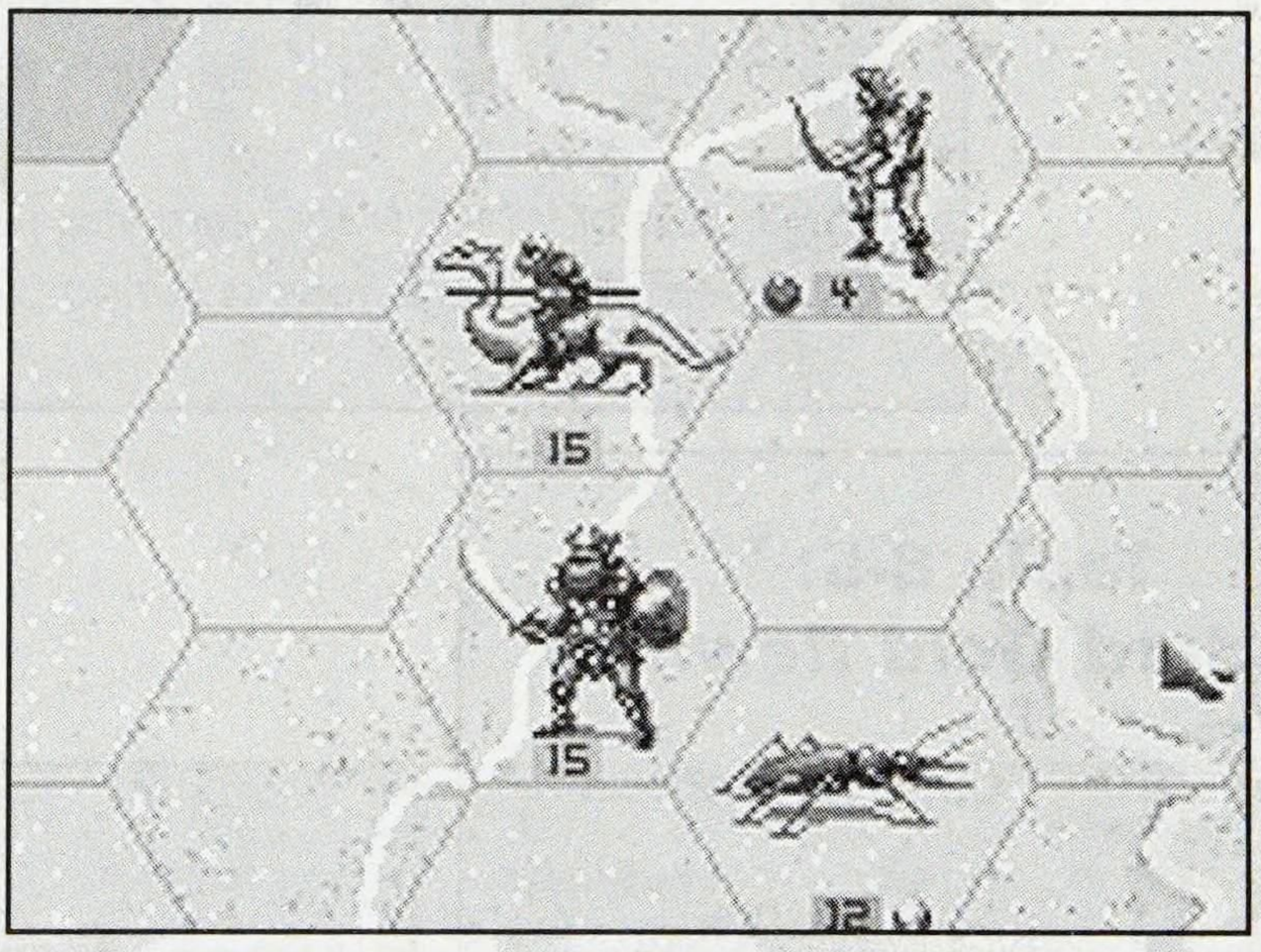


FIGURE 8-10A AND 8-10B. Deny the Infantry in front any defensive fire by forcing the Archer to retreat. Remember our Fire Beetle with the Magic Sword—doesn't seem so silly now, does it? Heavy Cavalry will work just as well.



Once the Slave Archer can no longer support the enemy front line units, close with them as before: Skirmishers, Light Cavalry, then Heavy units. You shouldn't be too bold with your Cavalry or Archers here—the enemy Serpent Riders pack a pretty good punch for a grade-zero unit, and they are effective in the open terrain around the river (never underestimate that +8 for a Cavalry Charge).

Certain names for places seem universal: every city in America seems to have a Jefferson Street or a Washington Avenue. In *Fantasy General*, Standing Stones seems to pop up everywhere, so we'll call this Standing Stones II—not the nicest place to visit, as Table 8-4 will show. On the other hand, the Altar of the Twin is worth visiting for any Champion Tourist.

Table 8-4: Standing Stones II Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
For Marshal Calis:		
Malric	Hero	100%
For Warlord Marcas:		
Sergeant	Hero	40%
Gold	See Table 8-5	60%
For Sorceress Mordra or Archmage Krell:		
Gold	See Table 8-5	40%
Magic Item	See Table 8-6	60%*

*Regardless of which Magic Item you receive, either an Orc or Goblin unit will appear and attack from its hiding place.

Table 8-5: Standard Gold Rewards

Gold Amount	Chance to Receive
40	20%
50	20%
60	20%
70	20%
80	20%

Table 8-6: Magic Item Rewards

Item	Effect	Chance to Receive
Sword	+2 Melee	11.11%
Axe	+3 Melee	11.11%
Sling	+2 Skirmish	11.11%
Staff Sling	+3 Skirmish	11.11%
Javelin	+4 Skirmish	11.11%
Bow	+3 Missile	11.11%
Crossbow	+4 Missile	11.11%
Shield	+2 Armor	11.11%
Armor	+3 Armor	11.11%

Hero Showcase

Malric the Dragonlord is a living legend, the greatest of all Sky Hunters:

Malric

Melee	Armor	MR	Movement	Spotting	Spells
22	22	75	7	4	Panic

One of the main reasons to play Marshal Calis is that you get Malric; the Dragonlord is an instant Air Force all by himself. You won't find his equal until you get to grade-5 Sky Hunters: the Phoenix Hawks, Shadow Dragons, and Malric's evil adversary, Malkin Nightwing. If supported by Silver Dragons or better, Malric forces the Shadowlord to spend far too much gold on Sky Hunters. If you have the Amulet of Resistance, Malric is a good choice to wear it, since he will be the target of several magic spells.

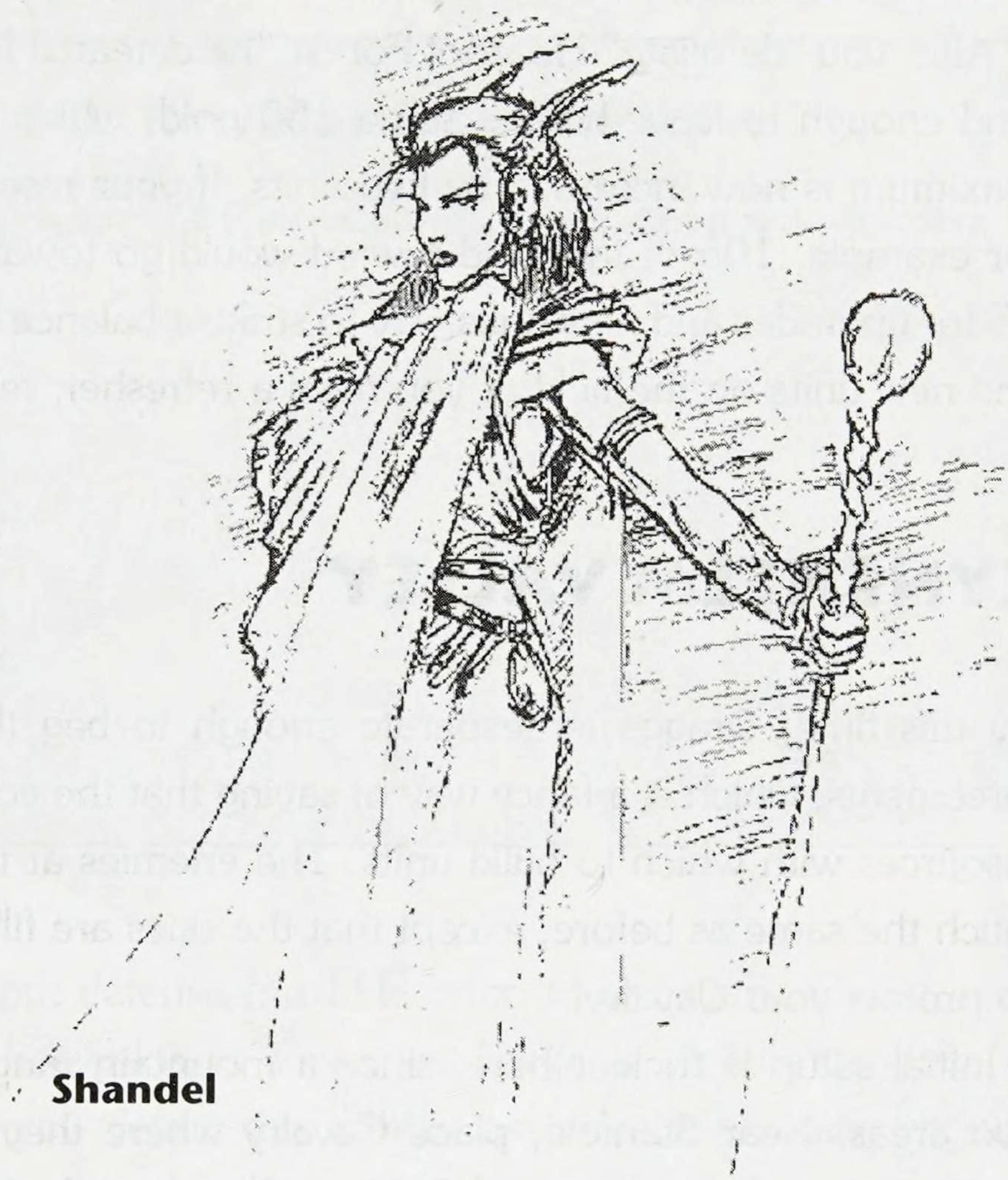
One reason it's so hard to win with Krell is that the Archmage is respected more than loved or idolized by his peers. While Shandel automatically joins Mordra's army at the Altar of the Twin, she merely gives Krell a gift of gold (maybe they have a past relationship we don't know about). Meanwhile, the Warlord and Marshal are cleaning up on Sergeants and Dragon Lords. Well, just be sure to make good purchases with all the gold that Krell is likely to pick up along the way.

Table 8-7: Rewards from Altar of the Twin

Reward	Type	Chance to Receive
For Archmage Krell:		
Gold	See Table 8-5	100%
For Sorceress Mordra:		
Shandel the Enchantress	Lt. Infantry/Hero	100%
For Warlord Marcas or Marshal Calis:		
Peasants	Lt. Infantry	20%
Warband	Hvy. Infantry	20%
Squires	Cavalry	20%
Lt. Cavalry	Lt. Cavalry	20%
Apprentices	Spellcaster	20%

Hero Showcase

If Shandel the Enchantress were merely used as Light Infantry, she would still be a welcome addition to Mordra's army:



Shandel

Melee	Armor	MR	Movement	Spotting	Spells
16	15	75	4	4	Charm

Shandel's Charm is among the most effective—if short-lived—spells in the game. She casts it, once per turn, upon any enemy within three hexes; if the enemy unit fails to resist, it fights for your army this turn only. A very effective tactic is to Charm a dangerous unit, such as a Lionman or Rhino Knight, and force it to fight at bad odds, so that it, and hopefully the enemy unit it attacks, are both badly mauled. Then move units such as Skirmishers, backed by Archers, into position near them, so that they cannot rest properly. If the AI has formed a Porcupine defense, simply Charm one of the Archers and turn it against the other, then attack the front line units, now unsupported by defensive Missile fire.

After you "defoliate" Hoaroot Forest, the defeated forces of King Dragga are kind enough to leave behind some 150 gold, which you'll need—your Army Maximum is now increased by two units. If your research total is 70 percent, for example, 105 of this gold reward would go toward research, leaving only 35 for upgrades and new units. Try to strike a balance between new technology and new units on the field. If you need a refresher, refer to Chapter 6.

CYNEHELM VALLEY

By this time, Dragga is desperate enough to beg the Shadowlord for reinforcements, which is a fancy way of saying that the computer finally gets a few resources with which to build units. The enemies at the start of the battle are much the same as before, except that the skies are filled with Flying Monkeys, so protect your Cavalry!

Initial setup is trickier here, since a mountain range splits your forces into two areas. Near Stanfeld, place Cavalry where they can cross the river and outflank the advance force of Goblins, Orcs, and Archers. Use any Apprentice Spellcaster to force enemies to retreat from their river defense position. Force your way across the river if you must, but be patient. According to the difficulty of the AI setting, the computer may build its first Ogres and/or Trolls here. Make sure that you use your Skirmishers (don't risk your Archers) and Light Cavalry to Disrupt these formidable opponents first, before sending in the Barbarians or Heavy Cavalry to finish the job.

After a successful river crossing in force, capture Norcross and send one fast unit (Light Cavalry is ideal) to the Cave, where you are rewarded according to Table 8-8.

Table 8-8: Rewards from the Cave

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
For Sorceress Mordra or Marshal Calis:		
Gold	See Table 8-5	100%
For Warlord Marcas:		
Borric Stiffbeard	Hero	100%
For Archmage Krell:		
Gold	See Table 8-5	40%
Magic Item	See Table 8-6	60%

Dragga has an in-depth defense from Fetterton to Draggario Castle, which will cause you to take heavy losses if you just barge in. A little patience and planning, though, lets you defeat the motley assortment of units, including Disease Throwers, in piecemeal fashion. Use the creek to cover your flank—Dragga's forces don't really have enough Cavalry, despite the Serpents—and swing around to come between Fetterton and the Castle. Anywhere you see a Disease Thrower, destroy it, then support your attacking units with Archers.

Archers are always essential, but Cynehelm is tough to win without Missile support. One of the best ways to hurt Ogres, for example, is by defensive Missile fire from experienced troops, especially Longbows. Archers are also invaluable in chasing down Sky Hunters, as in Figure 8-11. You need at least three Missile units—or Malric—or a lot of luck, if you want to get through Cynehelm Valley without losses.

Another must-have unit is a Siege platform, preferably a grade-1 Ballistae (as opposed to a grade-zero Catapult). If you have no better targets, they are good at softening up Sky Hunters and other Air units from up to three hexes away. If you wish to fire before you move, simply click the Move/Fire button in the lower left corner of the interface screen (Figure 8-12).

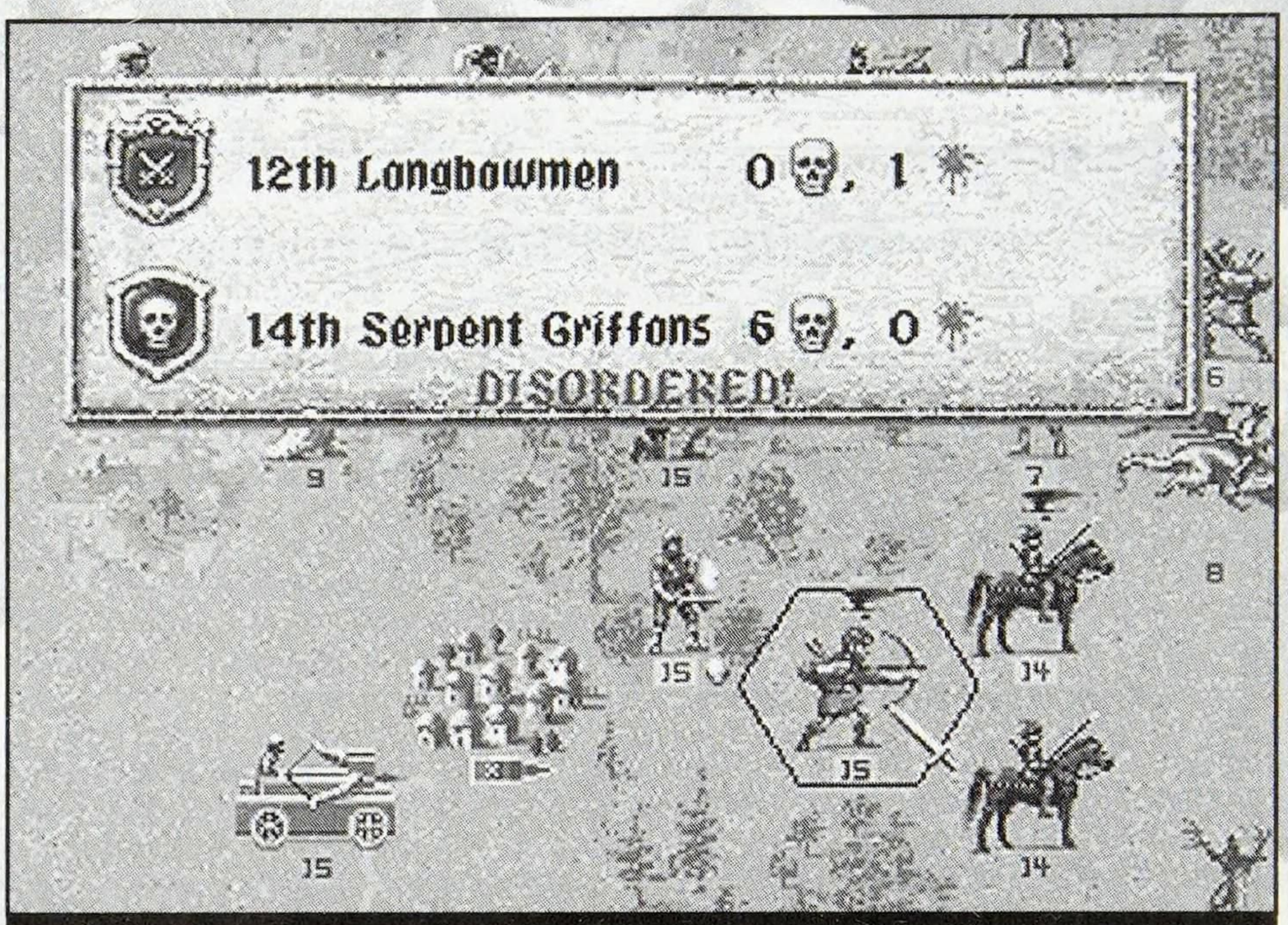


FIGURE 8-11.
First, the Siege unit attacks the enemy Griffon from a safe distance, then the Longbow unit moves into the Air unit's hex and fires away, essentially putting the Sky Hunter out of commission for at least a turn.

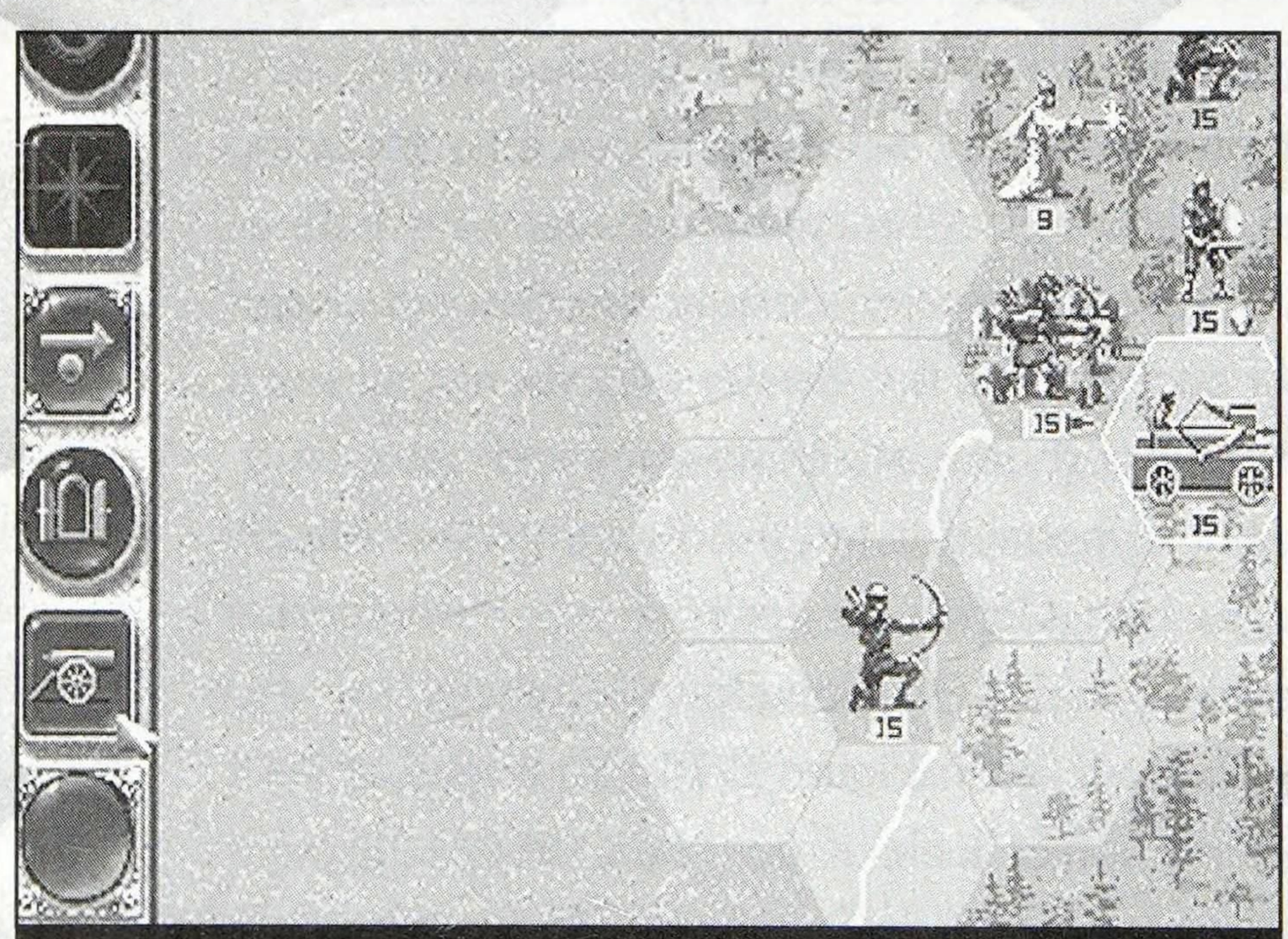


FIGURE 8-12.
Why move a Siege platform into the same hex as an enemy Air unit, where it can be damaged by return fire? Just click the Move/Fire button, shoot first and move afterwards.

A more conventional use of Siegecraft is found in Figure 8-13, where each unit attacking the Castle gets the Siege bonus, if they are next to the Siege unit. The modifiers usually reduce the amount of time needed to take a Castle or Keep by $E=MD^2$, wherein E stands for Entrenchment, M is Melee/Modifier, and D is the

base number of Dead Orcs (yes, I'm kidding!). Those not wishing to go through the rigorous mathematical proof for this formula are advised to use Coleman's Constant, which estimates that for every Siege/ Infantry combination assaulting a Castle, said Castle will fall one turn sooner (factored into this is the fact that units in Castles, Towers, and Keeps do not retreat).

SHRINE OF ANARK

While your northern force is sieging Draggorio Castle, your smaller southern force should move rapidly toward the Shrine of Anark, then upon Marebeck, famous throughout Keldonia for its brews and ales, crafted from the finest hops found throughout the lands of Aer.

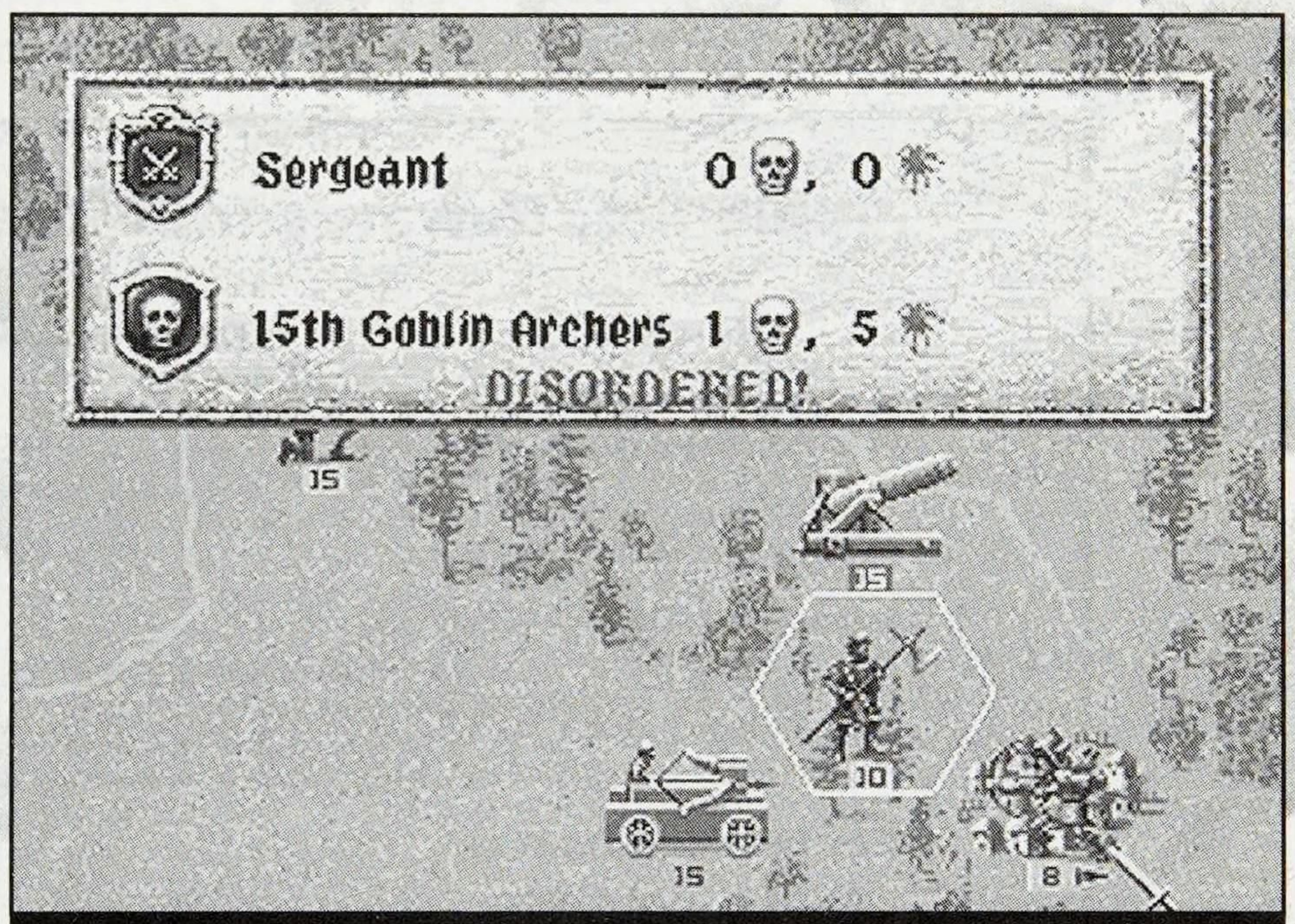
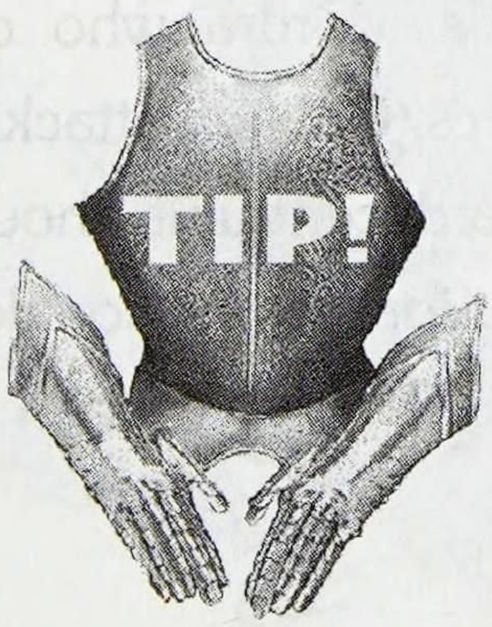


FIGURE 8-13.
Attacking one-on-one gives this Sergeant no real advantage; but with the support of these two Siege units, the enemy defender will retreat, and might even be wiped out.



Since Apprentices are inexpensive, I wouldn't think of talking you out of buying them. Just keep in mind that an Apprentice's wonderful Banshee spell is of no use against Air units, or any unit in a Tower, Castle, or Keep–since none of those units will ever retreat.

A balanced force is suggested, but you can get away with a few more Light Infantry here—you'll need the big hitters up north.

There is nothing to be gained at Marebeck other than securing the southern flank of this medium-sized battlefield (24 x 24 hexes). The Shrine, however, can be a treasure trove or a nightmare, as Table 8-9 shows:

Table 8-9: Rewards from the Shrine of Anark

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
For Archmage Krell:		
Loric Strongarm	Hero	100%
For Sorceress Mordra:		
Gold	See Table 8-5	40%
Magic Item	See Table 8-6	60%
For Warlord Marcas or Marshal Calis:		
Gold	See Table 8-5	40%
Magic Item	See Table 8-6	60%*

*Regardless of which Magic Item you receive, either an Orc or Goblin unit will appear and attack from its hiding place.

Surprise! Krell recruits a Hero despite himself, and it's Mordra who only receives cash or a Magic Item from Loric. As far as the Orcs/Goblins attacking, it's still worth it to get the Magic Item. Consider sending in a decent unit, though, because any unit that is eliminated loses the Magic Item *forever*. Also, don't forget to reassign Magic Items between scenarios to units that have been upgraded or have gained experience.

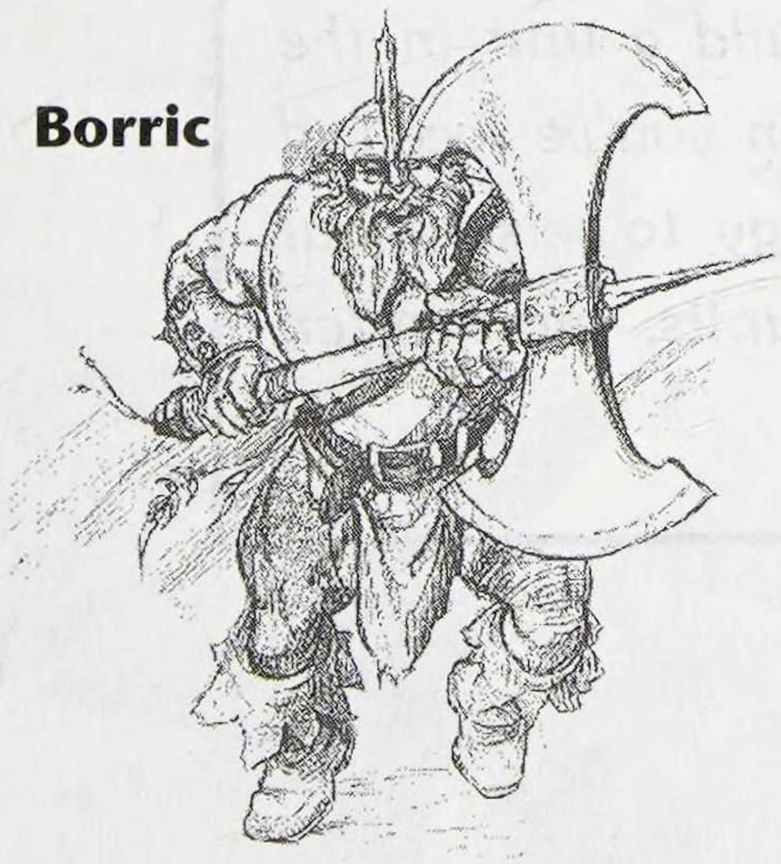
Hero Showcase

The Borric and Loric show has been canceled, not due to low ratings but because of conflicting exclusive contracts. Borric feels that he must honor his commitment with the Warlord Marcas, and Loric insists on touring only with Krell's World of Magic. The Fantasy Newsbrief:

Loric

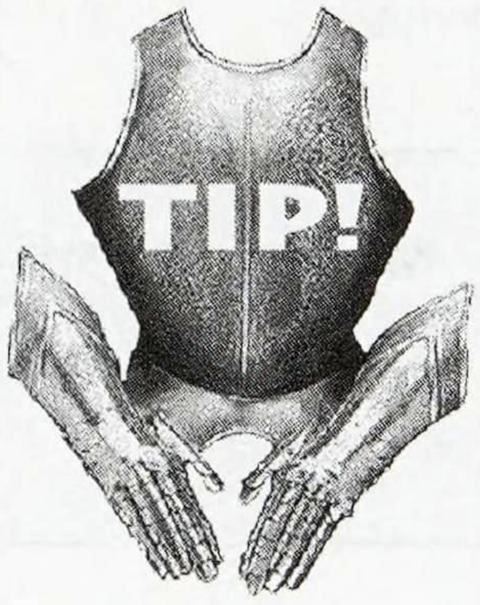
Hero	Melee	Armor	MR	Movement	Spotting	Spells
Borric	23	22	90	3	3	Armor
Loric	25	20	100	3	3	Berserk

Borric is more than just another decoration in the Warlord's medal collection. His ability to grant Magic Armor for a turn on adjacent units allows them to fight longer in the front lines—a place where Borric always is, due to his own tremendous Armor rating, which allows him to stand up to the most ferocious Beasts the Shadowlord can hurl at him. Loric is even stronger than a Lionman, but his bloodthirsty nature results in his Armor rating being less than Borric's. Still, Loric is the perfect complement to the Archmage's army: he resists Magic well; he possesses incredible Melee strength; and his heroic feats will inspire the insipid morale of Krell's forces, especially when he casts a Berserk spell on an adjacent friendly unit. You'll be happy to have either Loric or Borric when you reach the second continent.



Borric

When you emerge victorious at Cynehelm Valley, the entire continent has been liberated. The Council of Five is still unsure of your ability to win the ultimate victory over the Shadowlord, but they are enthusiastic enough to authorize an increase of four in your Army Maximum. Luckily, you find 250 gold hidden in Draggorio Castle (you can't get it until you win the scenario, sorry), plus the Amulet of Resistance. Save the game here—it gets a lot tougher on the next continent.



Don't simply fill out the units in your increased Army Maximum with just anything you can afford: think about the Specialization rule, and consider getting another Slinger. Then you'll have gold left over to afford one of those expensive units you've researched. Often, it's better to upgrade experienced units than to simply fill a quota. You can always build a unit in the middle of a scenario, when you've received more gold—a riskier strategy, to be sure, but you end up with better units, more often than not.

CHAPTER 9

Stillness in the Breeze

Taming the Isle of the Four Winds

With Keldonia safely behind you, your attention turns to the Isle of the Four Winds. Aelcar the Shadow Wizard will certainly be a more worthy adversary than Dragga the Orc King. And what about those rumors of mechanical devices, larger than Werebears, that legend holds could scatter brave men like leaves and topple the very forests themselves?

Even if such things are true, and not merely tales spun to frighten children at night, what does it matter? The troops march with a newly found confidence from their recent triumphs and believe themselves a match for anything. Doubtless their spirits are also buoyed by the post-victory celebration thrown by the Elf-folk as, brave of heart and light of step, your army moves on toward the Vale of Sorrow.

VALE OF SORROW

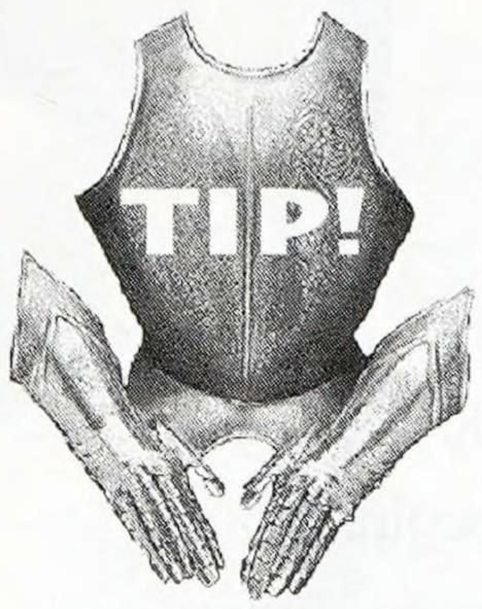
Few things are so difficult to maintain as a winning streak, especially when you have to play on the road. The Isle of the Four Winds is the true beginning of the campaign—all else to this point has been merely a training exercise. Aelcar isn't the Shadowlord, but he's no pushover like Dragga, either.

The Vale of Sorrow is not merely your first true test, it is one of the most critical scenarios in the entire campaign. Should you complete your objectives by *turn fifteen,* you win a *major victory*. What this means is that the Mechmaster Ferras will still be accessible in the Caerovian Peninsula during the next scenario. If you don't capture Ferras then, you will be unable to build Mechs for the entire campaign, so it is imperative that you complete your victory here within the fifteen-turn window of opportunity.

To win, you must:

1. **Defend Ellerbrook, which you own at the beginning of the scenario;**
2. **Capture Leavesly and Watelford—the victory hexes;**
3. **Take the Tower of Tombs; and**
4. **Clear enemy troops out of Aefwalt, Shadwell, and Spearsleah, the three villages on the map. This is not essential for victory, but you can't afford to leave enemy troops along your flanks; so take these villages anyway.**

You will definitely encounter Mech units during this scenario. The first are the Screamers, low-grade Sky Hunters that will try to damage any weak units they can find, particularly Spellcasters and Cavalry.



Remember that Magic units are vulnerable to Mech–and vice versa. Station Malric, if available, around any Cavalry units, particularly those with good experience. It's also a good time to group your Archers in porcupine formations with units at risk, especially Conjurers (Aelcar doesn't like Magic-enhanced troops used against him), since any unit next to more than one Missile unit will gain from multiple anti-Air fire.

Oddly enough, the usually sound, more deliberate tactical approach won't quite work here. With the time restrictions, you must move quickly, so you'll have to take more risks; that doesn't mean you have to be reckless.

Before you enter this scenario, here are a few tips to get you mobilized and moving in the right direction:

- *Build some Sky Hunters and one Bombardier. You need the latter to finish off crippled units,*

the former to protect the Bombardier and to win air superiority over the Screamers and other Sky Hunters of Aelcar.

- *Upgrade as many units as possible to Level Two, so that you have some firepower.*
- *If, because of upgrade costs, you have trouble filling out your Army Maximum (increased by four after liberating Keldonia), don't panic! Either buy a couple of inexpensive units—Slingers are always a good choice—or just wait until you are rewarded with more gold, so that you can afford higher-grade units.*
- *Don't get caught in a Specialization disaster. As we've seen from Chapter 7, it's better to improve in four or more areas of research than to throw all your combat eggs into one or two baskets.*

Aelcar has a lot of resources, and he tends to buy a reasonable amount of quality units rather than a ton of cheap ones (like Dragga). Even our Goblin and Orc enemies come newly dressed to the dance: Goblin Scouts tend to limit your ability to ambush the computer's army; Orc and Goblin Archers give the AI's front line troops much better Missile support than the lame Slave Archers.

To combat this worthy enemy, you ostensibly have a lot of options, but the lack of time makes it prudent for you to build fast units with a lot of punch. Mordra is actually fun to play on the Isle of the Four Winds because her Beast units are capable of going toe-to-toe with the Heavy Mech units without taking a lot of damage—and Beasts move *quickly*. Likewise, the normally Cavalry-heavy army of Marshal Calis can be effective; just make sure you have enough Missile, Air, and Skirmish units to mop up the scattered remains of enemies retreating from those well-timed Cavalry charges.

As you begin the scenario, don't simply rush forward into the teeth of the assembled army of Aelcar; that's exactly what he wants. Instead, move your army forward as in Figure 9-1, recon units first, Archers second, front line units next, and so on. Make sure that you have a Cavalry reserve to exploit any weaknesses.

The next turn, the aggressive Aelcar will attack. You will suffer some losses, but if you've set up your defense properly, Aelcar's troops will be bloodied and ripe for a counter-thrust. If tough units, such as Undead Cavalry, are half-strength or less, use

FIGURE 9-1.
Use an "aggressive defense" versus Aelcar.

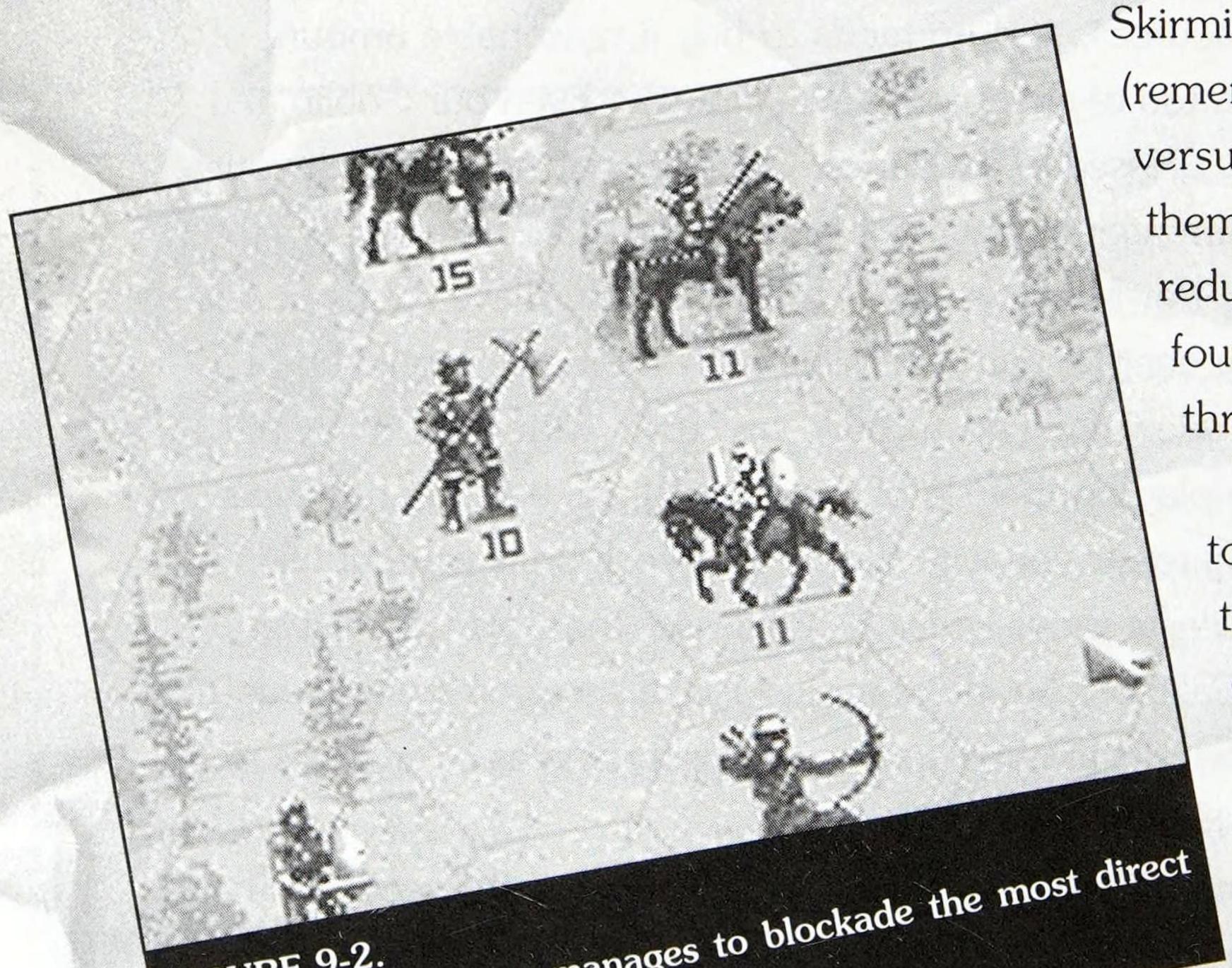


FIGURE 9-2.
The enemy unit here manages to blockade the most direct routes with its zone of control.

Skirmishers and Archers (remember, Archers get a +4 versus Cavalry) to attack them without losses. If you reduce these units below four Life, they pose little threat to you next turn.

Afterward, you'll need to split your army into two groups: The main group (which we'll call "The Knights") should swing to the south-west; the remainder of your forces ("The Marshals") moves

toward the Dead Stones and Spearsleah. The key here is *mobility*: keep the roads open, and don't let one or two enemy units slow you down (see Figures 9-2 and 9-3).

THE KNIGHTS RIDE SOUTH

The Shrine of the Winds is fairly easy to take because Aelcar's Mech and Magical units here have good armor but little offensive capability—they can't really hurt you if you're careful. When you capture the Shrine, you receive the following:

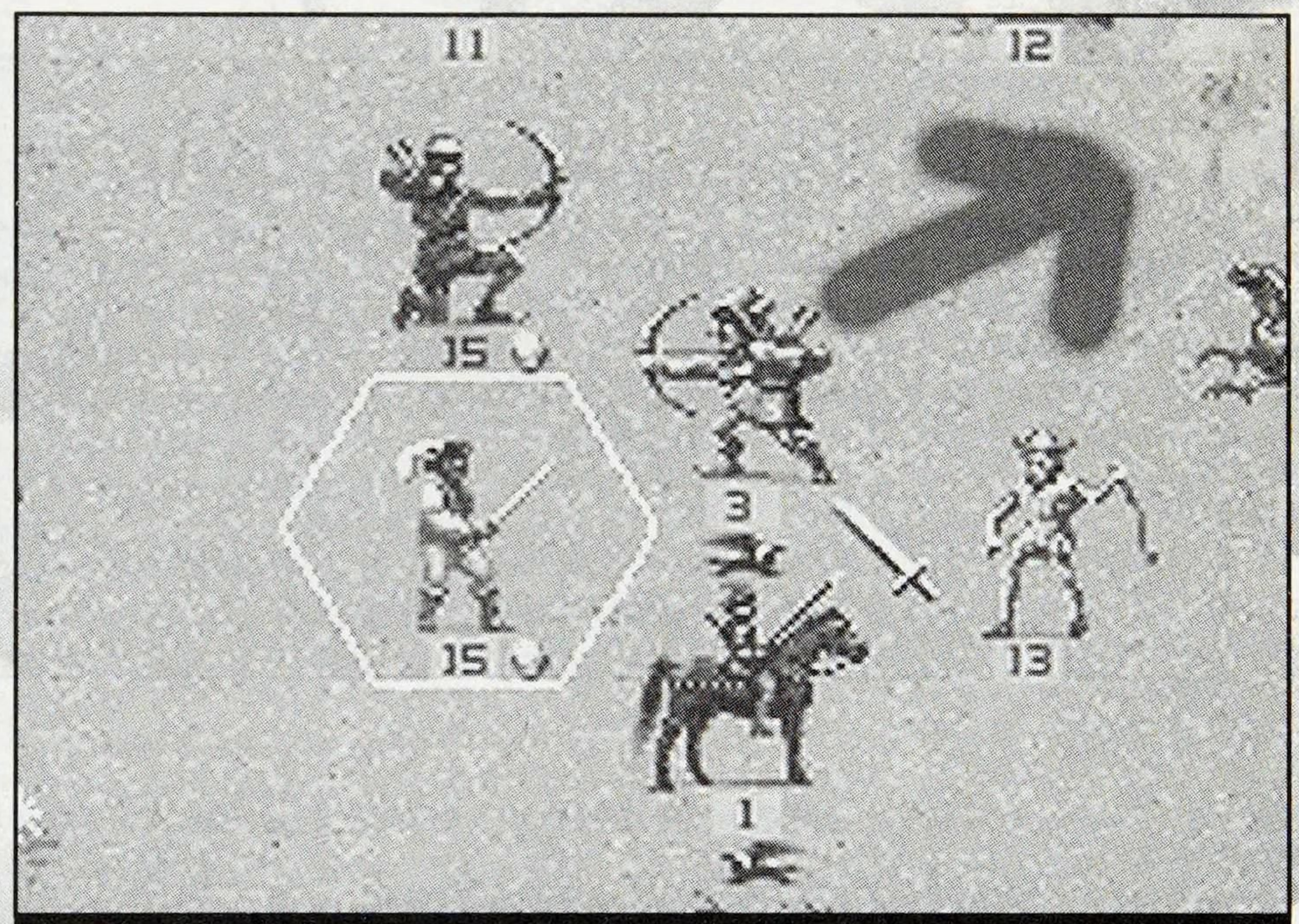


FIGURE 9-3.
Remember the Laws of Retreat, and force opposing units away from you so that they don't impede the progress of your army.

Table 9-1: Shrine of the Winds Rewards

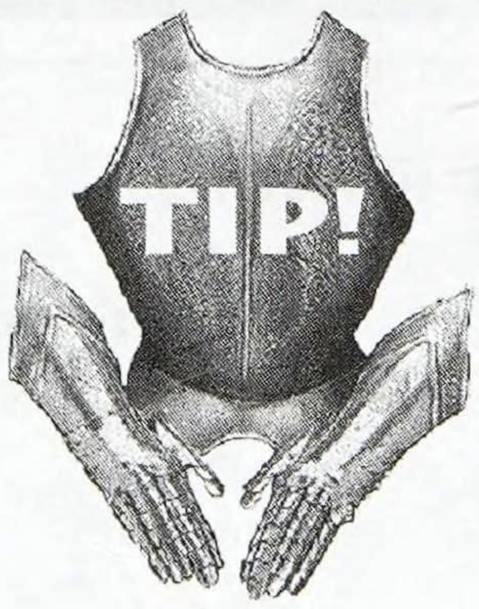
Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
For Calis, Mordra, or Krell:		
Hero	See Table 9-2	15%
Gold	See Table 9-3	25%
Auxiliary Unit	See Table 9-4	60%
For Warlord Marcas:		
Hero	See Table 9-2	25%
Gold	See Table 9-3	25%
Auxiliary Unit	See Table 9-4	50%

Once again, Heroes swarm to Marcas like bees to honey, but at least the other Champions have a good chance of getting another Auxiliary unit (which helps avoid Specialization effects).

Table 9-2: Basic Heroes

Hero	Melee	Armor	MR	Movement	Spotting	Spells	Chance to Receive
Sergeant	18	18	75	3 (Open)	3	None	50%
Lieutenant	21	21	75	3 (Open)	3	Force March	35%
Captain	24	24	75	3 (Open)	3	Force March	15%

The march of Heroic Heavy Infantry moves a little less slowly when you reach the commissioned officers. The Lieutenant and Captain may Force March, which is +2 to their movement rate for that turn.



Since time is of the essence in the Vale of Sorrow, a Captain or Lieutenant can use his Force March ability to cut corners–and not just down roads. Simply move your officer Hero at regular *speed onto a river, where it would normally have to stop, being technically Heavy Infantry. Then cast the Force March and* voila!–*the* Kapitan *or* Leftenant *gets an essentially "free move."*

Table 9-3: Standard Gold Rewards

Gold Amount	Chance to Receive
40	20%
50	20%
60	20%
70	20%
80	20%

Table 9-4: Chance of Recruiting Auxiliaries

Unit	Type	Marcas	Calis	Krell	Mordra
Militia	Lt. Infantry	20%	10%	10%	10%
Pikemen	Hvy. Infantry	25%	20%	10%	5%
Scouts	Skirmish	10%	10%	5%	10%
Werebears	Hvy. Infantry	15%	5%	10%	25%
Longbowmen	Archer	10%	15%	20%	5%
Centaur	Cavalry	10%	25%	10%	20%
Green Dragons	Sky Hunter	5%	10%	15%	10%
Healers	Spellcaster	5%	5%	20%	15%

What you notice is that the volunteers have moved up one grade in quality from those you received in Keldonia. But the type of unit each Champion is likely to receive has changed drastically:

- *Mordra's chances of getting a Cavalry unit have risen from 5 to 20 percent, her chance of Heavy Infantry is up 5 percent, and Sky Dragons are down 5 percent. The overall mobility of her army will probably increase, but she'd be advised to research Sky Hunters.*
- *The Warlord now has a 20 percent greater chance to get a free Heavy Infantry unit, and the corresponding drop in the chance for Light Infantry will hardly hurt his chances for victory. Build whatever you want, more free units are in your future.*
- *Krell's chances are up slightly for everything but Light Infantry, but the important addition is that he has a 20 percent chance to get Healers. These save Krell from having to use Heal spells, and also make excellent Skirmish units in a pinch.*
- *Calis is helped in the areas he needs most—Heavy Infantry—and in those he already excels—Cavalry. All in all, a nice problem to have. Strive for balance, and research whatever you don't get for free.*

When moving down with the Knight group, don't get hung up for long around Aefwalt and Wachian's Rest (see Table 9-5). A Hero, a Bombardier/Sky Hunter combo, an Archer, and one Cavalry should allow you to blitz through the two sites in two to three turns, while the remainder of the Knights—Heavy Infantry, Archers, and any Siege units—move on to Shadwell.

Table 9-5: Wachian's Rest Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
Gold	See Table 9-2	15%
More Gold	See Table 9-6	35%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	35%
Better Magic Item	See Table 9-8	15%

Table 9-7: Magic Item Rewards

Item	Effect	Chance to Receive
Sword	+2 Melee	11.11%
Axe	+3 Melee	11.11%
Sling	+2 Skirmish	11.11%
Staff Sling	+3 Skirmish	11.11%
Javelin	+4 Skirmish	11.11%
Bow	+3 Missile	11.11%
Crossbow	+4 Missile	11.11%
Shield	+2 Armor	11.11%
Armor	+3 Armor	11.11%

Whew! Well, if you've survived the gauntlet of tables, you've noticed one constant: Rewards increase proportionately with the difficulty of the scenarios. In this respect, *Fantasy General* is akin to a role-playing game, which doles out more treasure and magic items as you kill increasingly tougher monsters. But we aren't stuck in a dungeon crawl, thankfully.

Back to the Knights, who face tough opposition at Shadwell. Keep in mind that Aelcar's forces are determined to delay your advance to Leavesly and the Tower of Tombs so that you

Table 9-6: Even More Gold Rewards

Gold Amount	Chance to Receive
80	20%
90	20%
100	20%
110	20%
120	20%

Table 9-8 Excellent Magic Item Rewards

Item	Chance to Receive
Amulet of Resistance	8.33%
Cloak of Hiding	8.33%
Eagle-Eye Stone	8.33%
Rapid Boots	8.33%
Ring of Regeneration	8.33%
Staff of Fatigue	8.33%
Staff of Fireballs	8.33%
Staff of Healing	8.33%
Staff of Winds	8.33%
Storm Staff	8.33%
Wand of Fireballs	8.33%
Wand of Sickness	8.33%

(For details on the effects of these spells, see Table 7-2, "Magic Items," in chapter 7.)

miss your fifteen-turn express train to the Caerovian Peninsula (and your date with Ferras). If you have to sacrifice a low-experience unit to take Shadwell a turn sooner, do it! You must cross the southern river in force by turn ten or eleven, or you aren't going to complete your objectives in time.

Once you are next to Leavesly, even with a Skirmisher or Light Cavalry, Aelcar can't bring in his Mech reinforcements there. After you have cleared out opposition in Leavesly, go east to the Temple of Handola.

MARSHALS & THE POSSE

This mobile group should make tracks to Spearsleah and take out the Undead Cavalry and any other units stationed there. Either move a unit with a high movement rate or a Hero with Force March capability to the Dead Stones, while everyone else books down to Watelford.

The main advantage your smaller force has is the ability to hit fast and hard. If you have one Barbarian to spare, it's worth it to place him here because of the unit's relatively high movement rate and excellent Melee value.

After Watelford Falls, you must negotiate the river network that shields the Tower of Tombs and the Temple of Handola. Cavalry are a must—place them in attack groups, and make sure to keep reserves to exploit openings. As you get closer to turn thirteen, powerful Mech units such as the Steamphont begin to show as reinforcements for Aelcar. Don't panic, since Aelcar doesn't have an engineer to heal them. Still, you don't have time to play feint-and-parry, so take your shots when they become available—even if it means risking a unit or two.

As your two forces—Knights and Marshals—meet near the Temple of Handola, you should be able to pound Aelcar's defenders from one side and then the other. You can measure your pace by whether you succeed in liberating the desecrated Temple of Handola by turn thirteen:

Table 9-9: Temple of Handola Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
If liberated before turn 14:		
Priest of Handola	Hero	50%
Gold	See Table 9-6	20%
Amulet of Blessings	See Chapter 7 for Effects	30%
If liberated on or after turn 14:		
Amulet of Blessings	See Chapter 7 for Effects	100%

By turn fourteen, the Priest has met an honorable death fighting those who would desecrate the tomb. You are much better off arriving earlier and having the formerly meek monk as a Light Infantry fighter in your army. The Priest of Handola's stats are as follows:

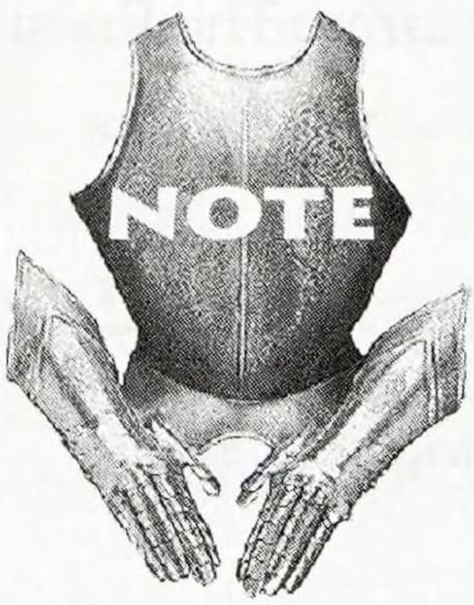
Melee	Armor	MR	Movement	Spotting	Spells	Ability
15	16	80	4	4	Bless	Mystic

When cast, Blessings bestow a +10 Morale upon all adjacent friendly units, who also have 25 percent of their Wounds converted to Suppression results; when cast on Light Cavalry and Skirmisher units, this spell is indeed a "blessing," as these units can have potentially 75 percent of their Wounds converted to Suppressions.

After you capture all of your objectives, accept the surrender—you need healthy units more than experience at this stage of the game. For your Herculean efforts, you receive the following:

1. **A princely sum of 200 gold;**
2. **The Eagle-Eye Stone (see Items, Chapter 7);**
3. **A Sergeant—you can always use another Hero; and**
4. **A volunteer regiment of Elf Knights.**

And if you won by turn fifteen, it's time to "do lunch" with Ferras down by the seaside...



Keep in mind that there are over ninety potential scenarios to go, so to describe each in the same detail as the Vale of Sorrow would make for a 1,500-page tome (not to mention the hundreds of tables). Therefore, the descriptions from here on will be more strategic, with specific tactical tips where appropriate.

THE CAEROVIAN PENINSULA

Like most bad guys, Aelcar's great fault—aside from his evil nature, of course—is his overweening pride. He really does not believe that any of the Champions can defeat him. His overconfidence has left you the chance to capture Ferras, the Mechmaster.

The peninsula is not particularly challenging because the terrain leaves little defensive cover for the Shadow troops. Thus, your Cavalry can run rampant

through enemy formations if they stay out in the open. With Ferras present, the computer tends to build more Mech units than ever before. Wear the enemy Mechs down and harry them at every opportunity with Skirmishers and Cavalry, since they cannot heal without an engineer (see Figure 9-4).

Starfall Altar is fairly easy to capture, and gives you the following:

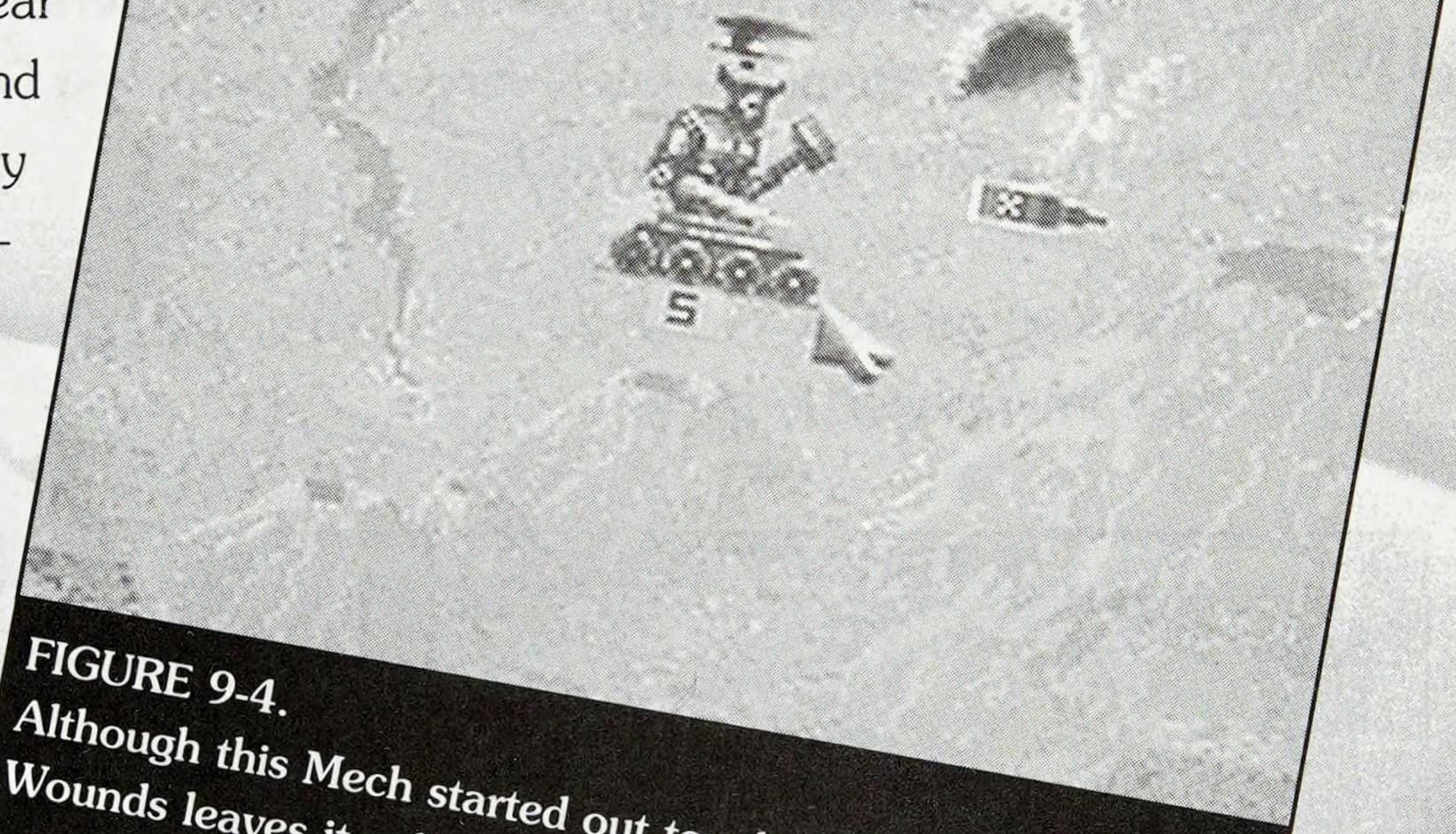


FIGURE 9-4.
Although this Mech started out tough, its inability to remove Wounds leaves it vulnerable, especially to Magic units.

Table 9-10: Starfall Altar Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
Gold	See Table 9-3	30%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	30%
Hero	See Table 9-2	40%

The other place of interest is the Cave, where you have a 100 percent chance of finding a standard amount of gold (Table 9-3). Problem is, you have a 75 percent chance that a group of Skeletons, Ogres, or Cobramen will attack your unit. So, send a tough unit, or a really expendable one, after the gold.

Winning is fairly simple, a reward for doing so well at the Vale of Sorrow. All you have to do is capture the Iron Tower. So, before traipsing down the coast, upgrade your Siege Engines. When victorious, you receive:

1. One hundred gold pieces to fill your coffers;
2. A brand-spanking new Mercury Cannon—a Ferras original; and
3. The ability to make Mechs!

Lest you go crazy building Mechs, remember that you can't fix 'em until you get an engineer somewhere on the third continent...

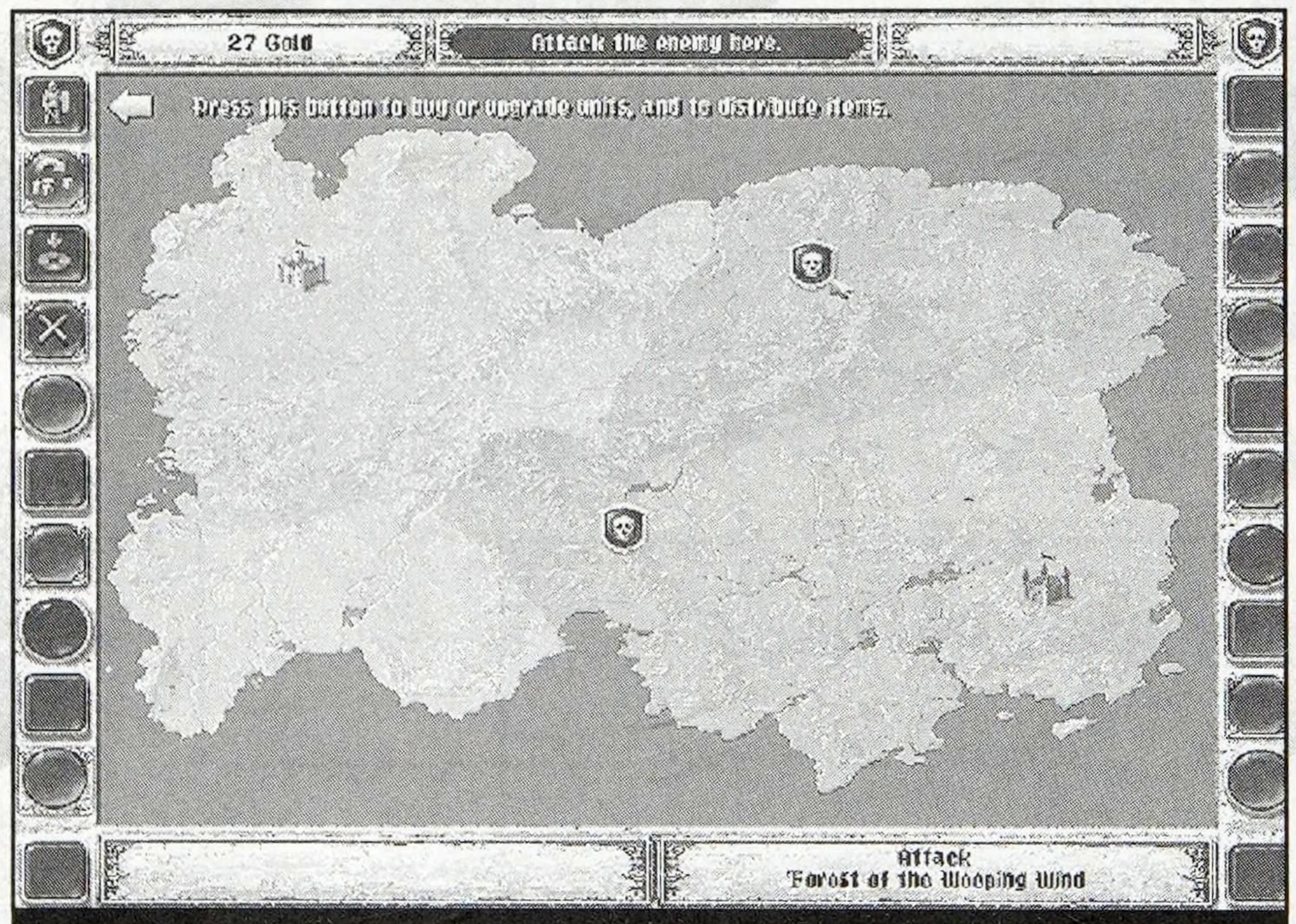


FIGURE 9-5.
Forest of the Weeping Wind is recommended by the author, if only because it tends to have less rough terrain than Broken Fang Pass.

WHICH AMBUSH?

Flushed with victory, you carefully deliberate where to strike next, certain that Aelcar is on the ropes. I hate to disillusion you, but don't spend a lot of brain power on this decision. Figures 9-5 and 9-6 show your choices for the next big battle: Broken Fang Pass and Forest of the Weeping Wind. If both of these aptly named battles sound like trouble, they are. Approximately 30 percent of

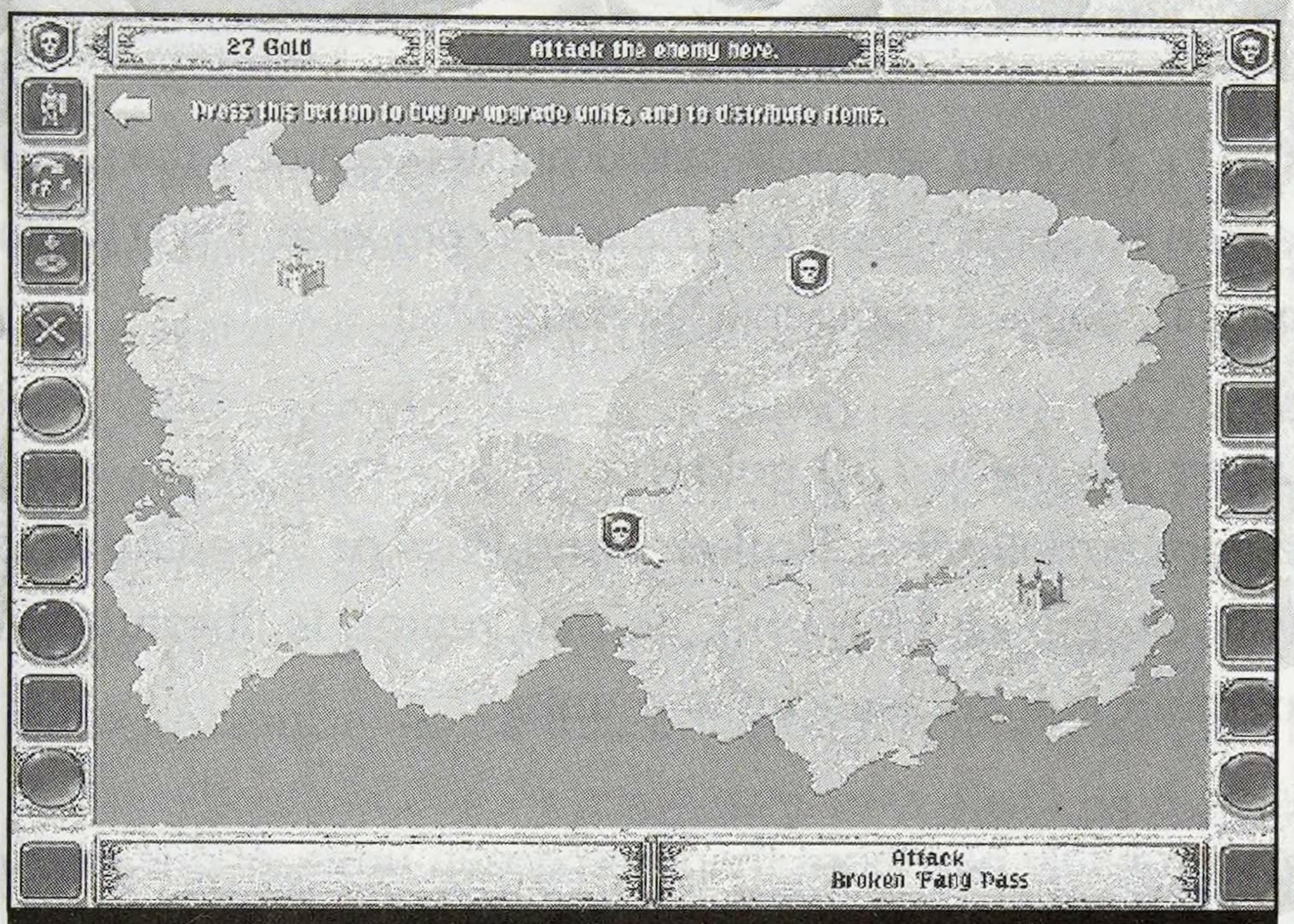


FIGURE 9-6.
Broken Fang Pass is usually every bit as much a headache as its name would imply, but the random setup means you might get lucky.

the scenarios in *Fantasy General* are generated randomly; these two scenarios give you the first bittersweet taste of that randomness.

If you were rewarded in the Caerovian Peninsula, you are subject to the Revenge of Aelcar in both of these battles.

The terrain is there only to discomfort you and aid your enemy, who desperately tries to ambush you and kill as many of your units as possible.Figure 9-7 shows a typical layout of Weeping Wind, with a scattering of generic towns and a token shrine.

Regardless of which battle you choose to fight, when the enemy army offers to surrender, accept! The *only* criteria for victory is to eliminate 80 percent of Aelcar's

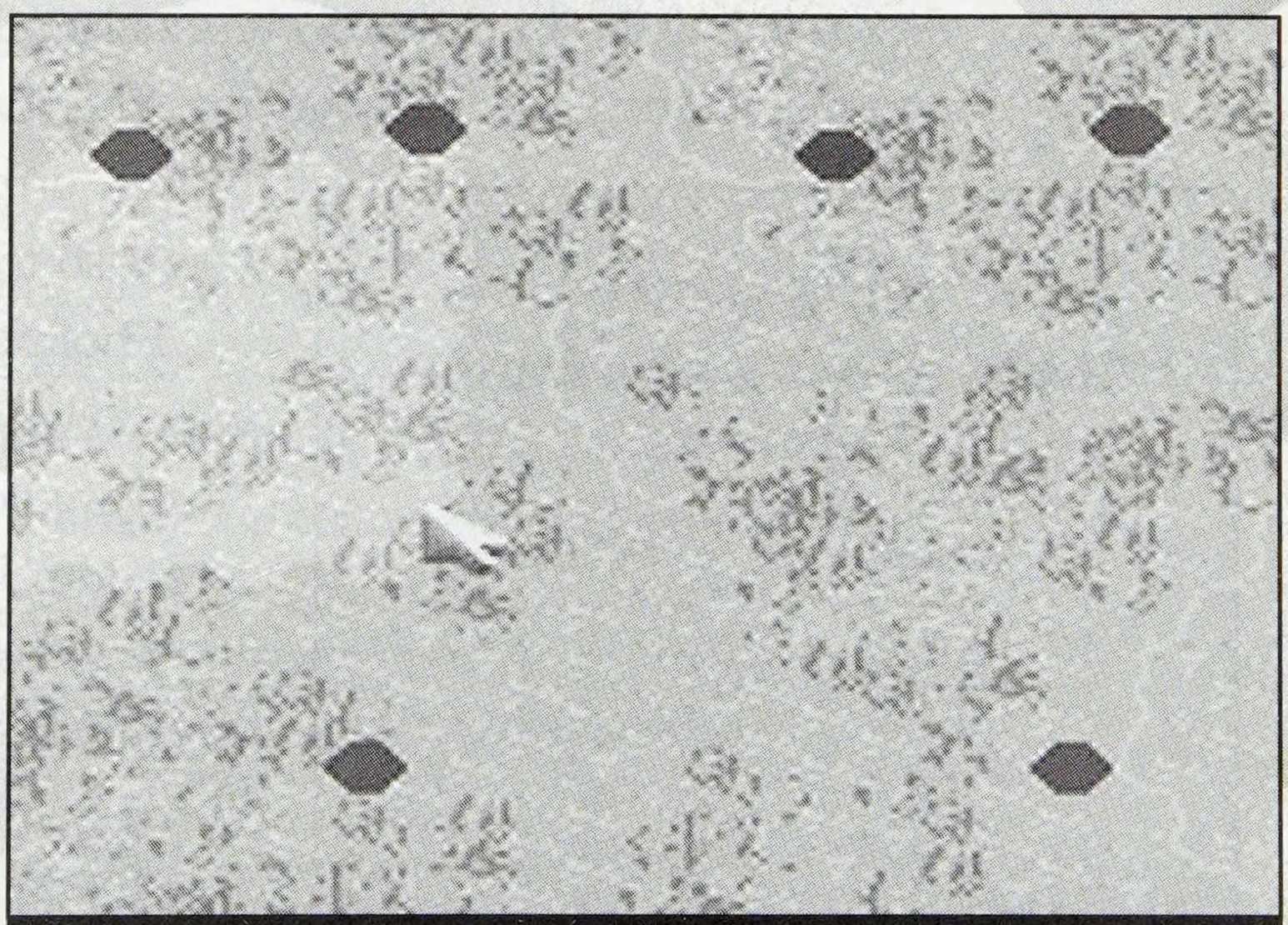


FIGURE 9-7.
There are more Mortals, Mechs, and Magic troops weeping than willow trees in this unenchanting forest.

force. Don't go looking for scores to settle with individual units because if the scenario ends and just one enemy is left standing, *you lose the entire campaign*. It isn't worth it.

At least when you win, you are compensated somewhat:

1. **Your treasure chest swells by 150 gold.**
2. **The other annoying battle (either Broken Fang Pass or Weeping Wind) is no longer available (thank Heaven!), as that region is liberated.**
3. **Your Army Maximum is increased by two units.**

By now, the Warlord probably has more than two dozen units, and even Krell and Mordra, with a little luck, should have a decent-sized army.

THE PRICE OF EFFICIENCY

Aelcar is in full retreat, hardly resembling the powerful wizard who, not so long ago, threatened to challenge the Shadowlord himself. How you pursue his broken army depends largely on what benefits you wish to get with your victory.

Rholmere is a brisk, fifteen-turn affair where you can pick up a basic Hero or Auxiliary volunteer, at the cost of running into a random foe:

If you win at Rholmere, you pick up a Roc Knight Sky Hunter. Rather nice, but remember that as soon as the Isle of the Four Winds is conquered, the volunteers all return home. Should you win at the Sundered Plains, you would receive instead an engraved Elf Chariot. Also, if by chance you *didn't* get the services of

Table 9-11: Circle of Hammerstone "Rewards"

Foes	Chance
Gargoyle	5%
Ogres	15%
Orc	5%
Skeletons	25%
Skeleton Slinger	15%
Undead Cavalry	20%
Wolf Rider	15%

the Priest of Handola, you *automatically* recruit Dreggo the Devastator. Finally, Cape Havoc gives you a mundane unit of Heavy Cavalry. Winning any of these three scenarios rewards you with 200 gold.

It really depends on what style you prefer to fight in. Rholmere requires that you split your force in two. The Sundered Plains is by far the most interesting, as both sides get to attack, defend, and counter-punch right up until the end. Cape Havoc is true to its name, a bloodbath with no objectives, just the 80 percent casualty figure that brings a temporary cessation of hostilities.

After you win one of these battles, you will be given the option of tackling Aelcar in his backyard—Drake Forge Valley. If you attack too early, Aelcar is ironically more capable of defending at the Citadel of Necrophis; the game assumes that the Shadowlord would never send troops to defend other continents against your guerrilla forces. So, make sure that you win *seven* scenarios on this continent before proceeding against Aelcar's fortress.

AELCAR'S DEMISE

Necrophis isn't your only problem; cleaning out Ferncroft and Ridgeview is necessary to clear the roads. There aren't any bonuses for early victory, however, so you can afford to be a little deliberate. Hornsfel Barrow, on the north edge of the battlefield, is a rather pleasant cavern tourist stop along Highway Aelcar:

Table 9-12: Hornsfel Barrow Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
Gold	See Table 9-6	30%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	30%
Better Magic Item	See Table 9-8	25%
Hero	See Table 9-2	15%

One run-down Magical hotel you *shouldn't* stay in, regardless of what new Mech conveniences it might offer, is the Temple of Mordoth. Oh, you receive some gold (standard) and a normal Magic Item, but you have to fight a Conjurer. Unless your chariot gets great mileage and you reach the temple by turn nine (almost impossible at Hard AI level), you have to face a Conjurer *and* a Skeleton. For the waste of time, it probably isn't worth the hassle.

Once you've eliminated the Heavy units between you and your objective, it's really pretty easy to take the Citadel. Necrophis's natural defenses are so formidable that it prevents the defenders from mobilizing, and the rough terrain allows you to cut and slash with Light Infantry and Skirmishers with additional modifiers (see the combat tables in Chapter 4).

Once Aelcar is defeated, you get the following:

1. **A "gift" of 250 gold from Aelcar, who all of a sudden wants to be your best buddy;**
2. **The Staff of Winds (see Chapter 7); and**
3. **Your Army Maximum increases by four (the Warlord's goes up by five).**

CHAPTER 10

Slaying the Serpent

Cutting Through the Jungles of Avernion

Thus far, it has been a campaign worthy of legend. Brave men—Mortal, Elf, and Dwarf alike—have died, to be sure. But they have fallen with honor, knowing that their deeds would help win the ultimate victory over a horrific foe. The army that once was so embarrassingly small has grown far past the point where it is merely respectable. Who would recognize those farmers and shepherds' lads now that their pitchforks have been traded for good Enlibar steel forged in a Dwarven smithy? Almost without thought, you grasp the bronze dagger at your own waist—your only link to parents forever lost—and wonder if the blessing bestowed upon it by the Priest of Handola will make it any more effective against the Undead. Smiling grimly, you doubt it will be long before you know the answer to that and many other questions, for your expedition is disembarking at Cape Dire...

A SLIMY FOE

Ssazikar the Snake is so contemptuous of your army that he is preparing to invade Keldonia. This is handled abstractly; if you lose any battle, it is assumed that Ssazikar's fleet sails and all the hard-earned gains of your campaign are for naught: Keldonia falls, the Council is dissolved, the stock market crashes—you get the picture. The way to avoid this is to win, and win *big*.

Fortunately, you are empowered by the Council to do just that. Depending on your Champion, your Army Maximum should be as shown on page 144 when you reach the third continent.

Warlord Marcas: 24 units
Marshal Calis: 24 units
Archmage Krell: 23 units
Sorceress Mordra: 22 units

Add to this anywhere from two to four Heroes (two to eight for the Warlord). Don't forget that Mordra also gets her two summoned units at the beginning of each scenario (which only last for that scenario—see Table 2-1, "The Sorceress Summons").

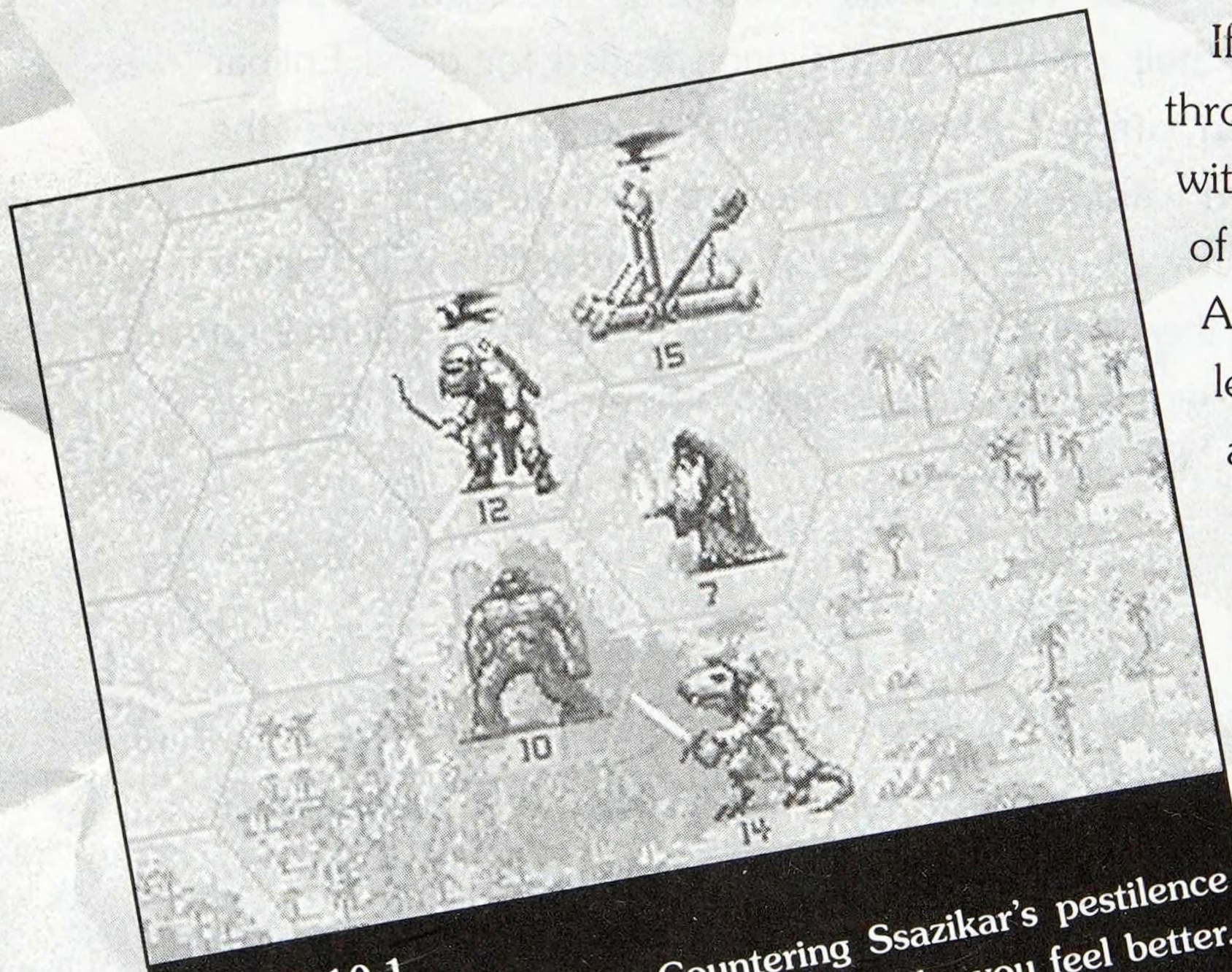


FIGURE 10-1.
An Ill Wind Befalls Thee: Countering Ssazikar's pestilence with Mordra's own Plague spell might make you feel better, but it's not a sure way of moving you toward your objectives—or keeping your precious Beast units healthy.

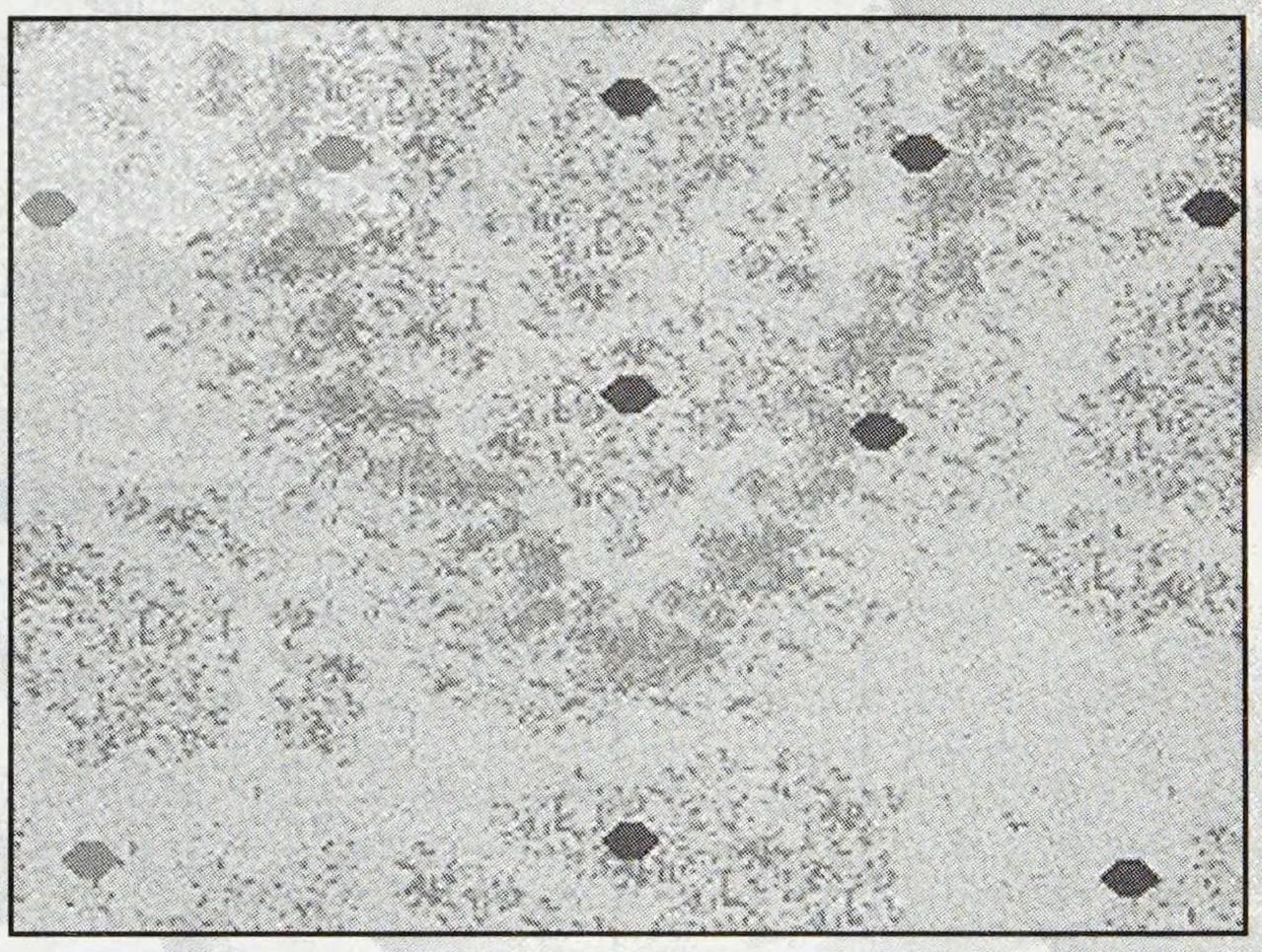
If you have trouble getting through Avernion, try again with the Warlord. By the end of this continent, Marcas's Army Maximum starts to leave the others behind, and the run of Heroes never stops.

Regardless of whom you're playing, Ssazikar makes for a formidable foe–his ability to cast Plague (just like that of Mordra) can be devastating. When you play Marshal Calis, for example, you find yourself in a feint-and-parry competition with Ssazikar, each waiting as long as possible to cast the respective Heal or Plague spell—since each character may cast it only once in a given scenario. With Mordra, the decision is even

tougher: Do I cast Heal Beasts after Ssazikar's Plague, or counter with my own Plague spell (see Figure 10-1)? I personally tend to go for the Heal Beasts, so that I can keep my Barbarians and Werebears healthy, happy, and capable of slicing up Ratmen.

ASPHEAD MOUNTAINS & BLACKMOON FENS

Snakes—big ones, anyway—are very much at home in jungles, which are very much in evidence all over Avernion. Two of the densest regions of vegetation are immediately before you as you begin the conquest of this continent (Figure 10-2). The Asphead Mountains are a near-impenetrable "V" of hills and ridges, making the trek toward the two Towers of Darkling and Phoenix a daunting task, as



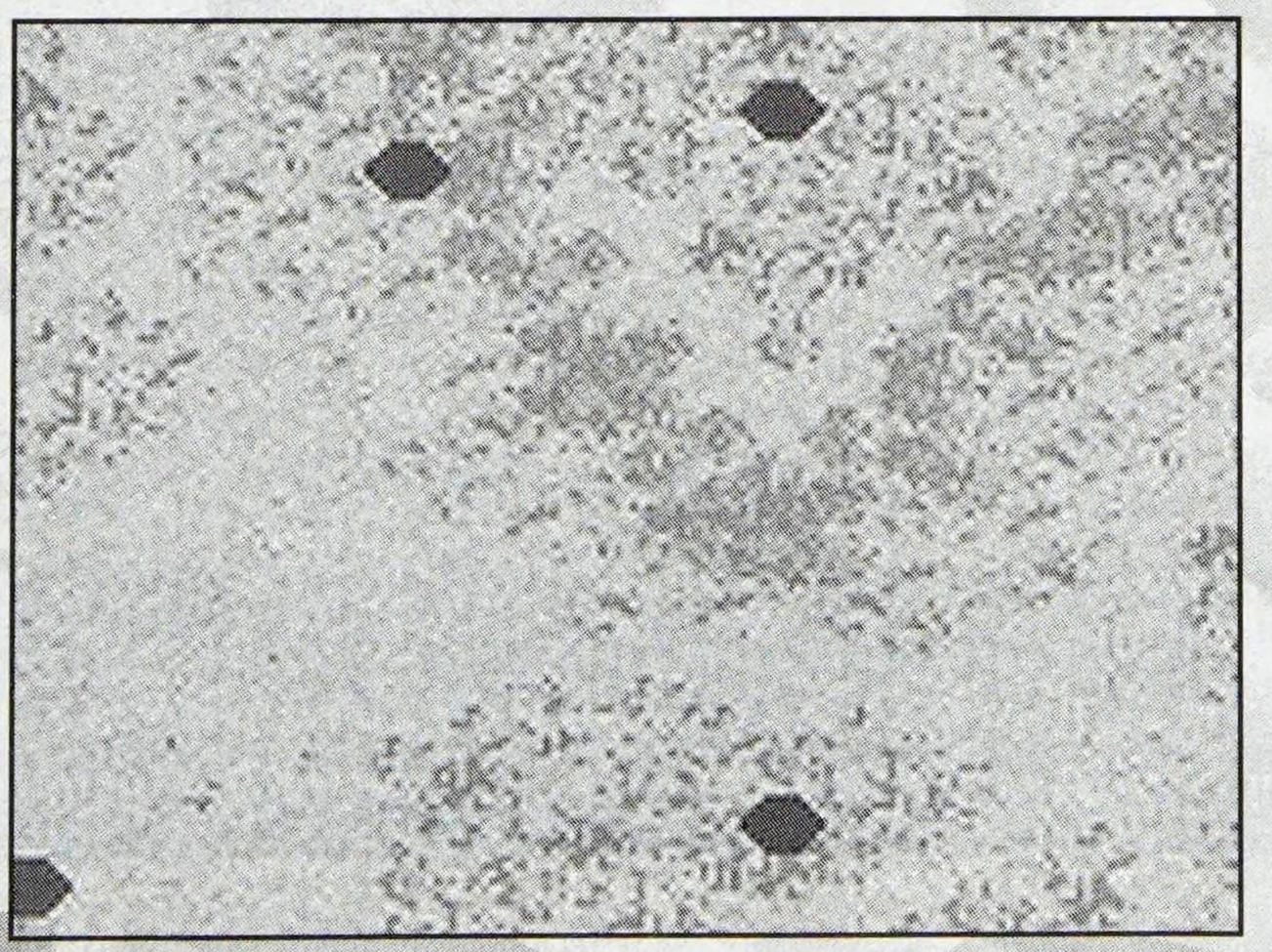


FIGURE 10-2A & 10-2B. "A fine mess you've gotten us into, great leader:" Deciding between Asphead Mountains and Blackmoon Fens doesn't seem like much of a choice.

Figure 10-3 shows. The Blackmoon Fens are only slightly less intimidating—a morass of swamps, bogs, and tangles that make the heaths of novelist Thomas Hardy seem almost wholesome by comparison.

Where you wish to strike depends on the rewards you seek, although most gamers will probably find the Fens easier to win. Light Infantry are much more effective than usual in either scenario because of their movement and combat bonuses in rough terrain (see Chapter 4 for details). Tables 10-1 through 10-4 detail the rewards from Asphead, and Tables 10-5 and 10-6 give rewards for points of interest (such as they are) in the Fens; but don't get sidetracked just for the sake of a few gold pieces. Time is of the essence, and should you win in fifteen turns or less, you will receive two auxiliary units instead of one. To win Asphead, you must capture both Towers, and at Blackmoon, you must capture the Keep and the villages of Alvord and Bucknell.

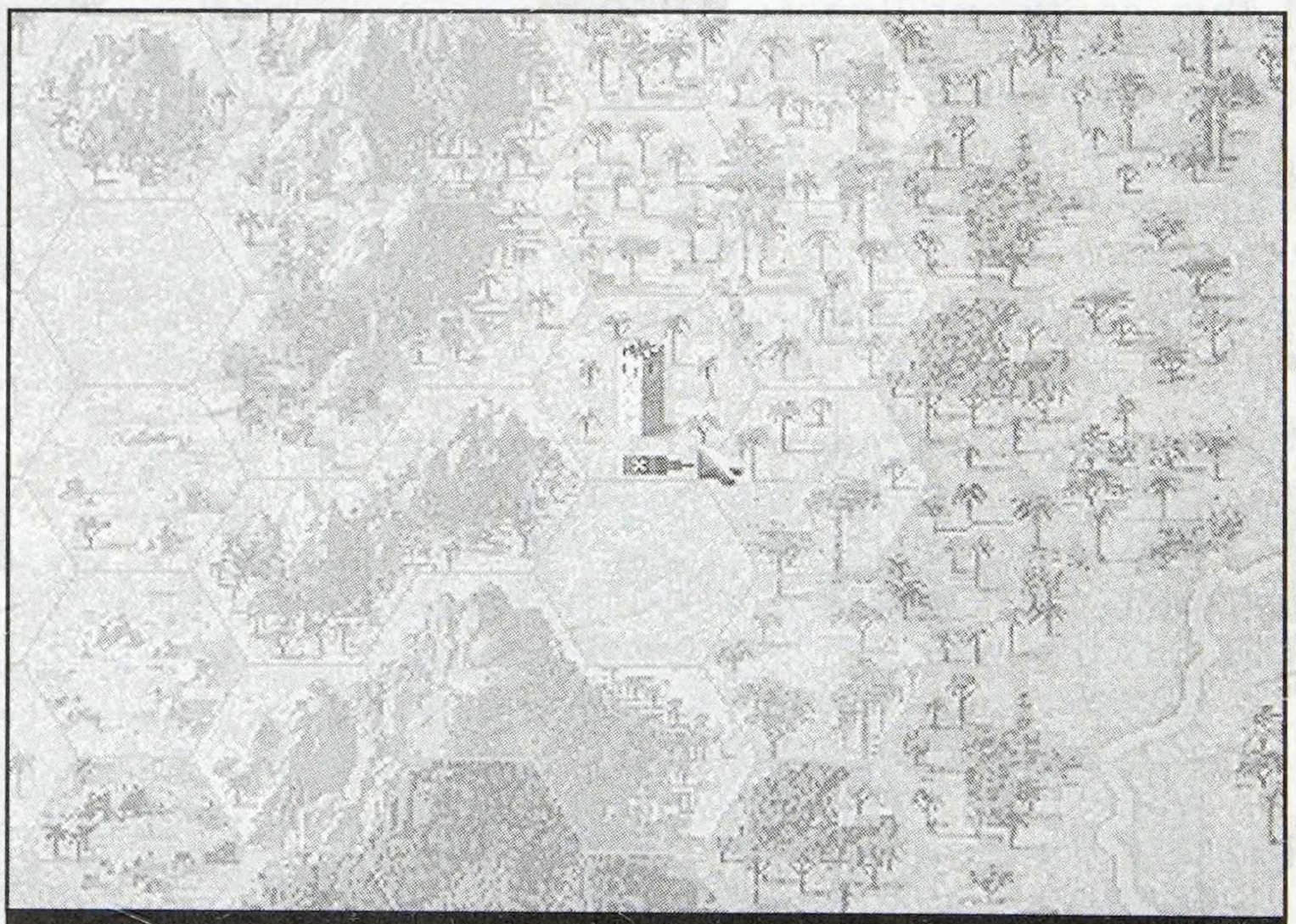


FIGURE 10-3.
It's a shame that there are no *Fantasy* Paratroops. You could certainly use some way of getting over the Asphead Mountains.

Table 10-1: Shrine of Tavish Rewards

Automatically receive one of the following Auxiliaries:

Unit	Type	Marcas	Calis	Krell	Mordra
Javelinmen	Lt. Infantry	20%	10%	10%	5%
Pikemen	Hvy. Infantry	20%	10%	15%	10%
Scouts	Skirmish	10%	10%	5%	10%
Werebears	Hvy. Infantry	5%	5%	10%	20%
Ogre Centaurs	Cavalry	10%	15%	20%	20%
Chariot	Cavalry	15%	25%	15%	10%
Juns	Lt. Cavalry	10%	10%	10%	15%
Dragon Riders	Bombardier	10%	15%	15%	10%

The bizarre thing about this Auxiliary table (which is standard for the whole continent of Avernion, by the way) is that Archers are conspicuously absent. The Javelinmen are a nice addition, but only the Warlord has a decent chance of getting them. Finally, the percentages are really weighted toward Cavalry and Heavy Infantry. To maximize their effectiveness, you'll have to attack straight down the roads—right where the enemy will be expecting you. So, don't expect the occasional free Auxiliary to bail you out of a jam in the jungle.

Table 10-2: Radiant Shrine Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
Gold	See Table 9-6	20%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	50%
Better Magic Item	See Table 9-8	30%

The Radiant Shrine is an appropriately sunny place to visit, but the Pariah's Den is equally aptly named, as you find to your dismay:

Table 10-3: Pariah's Den Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	60%
Better Magic Item	See Table 9-8	40%

Regardless of which Magic item you pick up, you'll need it, as Conjurers appear and attack you.

Actually, the long, hard trek through Asphead is worth it, since the Altar of the Unsleeping never fails to give you something useful:

Table 10-4: Altar of the Unsleeping Rewards

Reward	Chance to Receive
140 Gold and Magic Armor	30%
80 Gold and Staff of Healing	30%
Recruit Krindel the Elf Lord	40%

The Staff of Healing is a boon for injured Beasts and Mortals alike, but it can't help your Mech units. The Magic Armor isn't quite as nice, but the +3 helps to fight off Cobramen and Ratmen. The real treasure here, however, is neither the items nor the gold but Krindel the Elf Lord.

Hero Showcase

Krindel is a wonderful Archer, but it's his ability to ignore terrain restrictions that makes him such a useful Hero in the jungles of Avernion.

Krindel the Elf Lord is silent and reserved, even for those of the Fairer Folk. A peerless tracker, he can stalk prey through the snow, it is said, without leaving a trace of his own passage. Krindel's stats are as follows:

Krindel

Melee	Armor	MR	Missile	Spell
5	15	75	20	Pathmaster

Surprisingly, Krindel's Magic Resistance is only the norm of 75, but that has as much to do with *Fantasy General's* matter-of-fact treatment of Elves as Mortal as anything. Otherwise, there's little fault to find in this exceptional Hero. With his Melee of 5, Krindel has a chance to survive even if forced into hand-to-hand combat against all but the toughest Shadow troops. His Missile value of 20 is simply devastating when he gains experience, and the Pathmaster spell is a great boon when traversing the highly difficult terrain of Avernion. Next to Malric, this is my favorite Hero.

If you can't decide which path to take, the potential to obtain Pathmastery offers a good argument to go mountaineering in Asphead. But you'll feel a bit silly if you go to all that trouble and don't recruit the Heroic Elf Lord. In war, there are no certainties...

The other path you may take leads you through infested swamps—no wonder Plague seems so appropriate a weapon for Ssazikar. While the villages and towns are by and large forgettable, you should capture Daemon's Maw so that you pick up an Auxiliary unit. Whether you stop in the Serpent's dig depends on how you are doing time-wise, and whether a magic item is worth the 100 percent chance you will immediately fight Ratmen to retain the item's possession (you have a 50-50 chance of a normal or "excellent" magic item). Although they may take you slightly out of your way, you should visit both the Altar of the Farseer and Starhunter Eyrie, where, as Tables 10-5 and 10-6 show, you will receive magical gifts, fortune, and perhaps a famed Heroine.

So, you see that you have the same chance to recruit Valira as to recruit Krindel. And while the Pathmaster ability of the latter is certainly nice, Valira is no slouch either.

Table 10-5: Altar of the Farseer Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	25%
Better Magic Item	See Table 9-8	25%
Gold	See Table 9-6	50%

Table 10-6: Starhunter Eyrie Rewards

Reward	Chance to Receive
140 Gold and Magic Armor	30%
80 Gold and Staff of Healing	30%
Recruit Valira the Valkyre	40%

Valira

Hero Showcase

Put on the Wagner CD because Valira is ready to fly the unfriendly skies of Avernion.

Valira isn't quite up to Malric's lofty standards, but she is still a powerful Sky Hunter. And if you don't have the services of the Dragonlord—meaning that you're playing a Champion other than Marshal Calis—she is well worth your time, especially since the Starhunter Eyrie is more accessible than the Altar of the Unsleeping. Valira's spell can restore morale of friendly units, and her Mystic ability (see Chapter 7 for details) lets her fight at a competitive level with Ssazikar's tougher magical units.

Melee	Armor	MR	Spell	Ability
18	17	75	Restore Morale	Mystic

Regardless of whether you attempt to scale the towering Asphead Mountains or negotiate the treacherous Blackmoon Fens, the following occurs when you emerge victorious:

1. You get 250 gold from Ssazikar's Savings & Loan;
2. You receive one Militia unit;
3. Whichever area you didn't invade is liberated; and
4. If you win by turn fifteen, you also receive either a Scout or Juns unit.

FIGHTING THE FORCES OF CHANCE

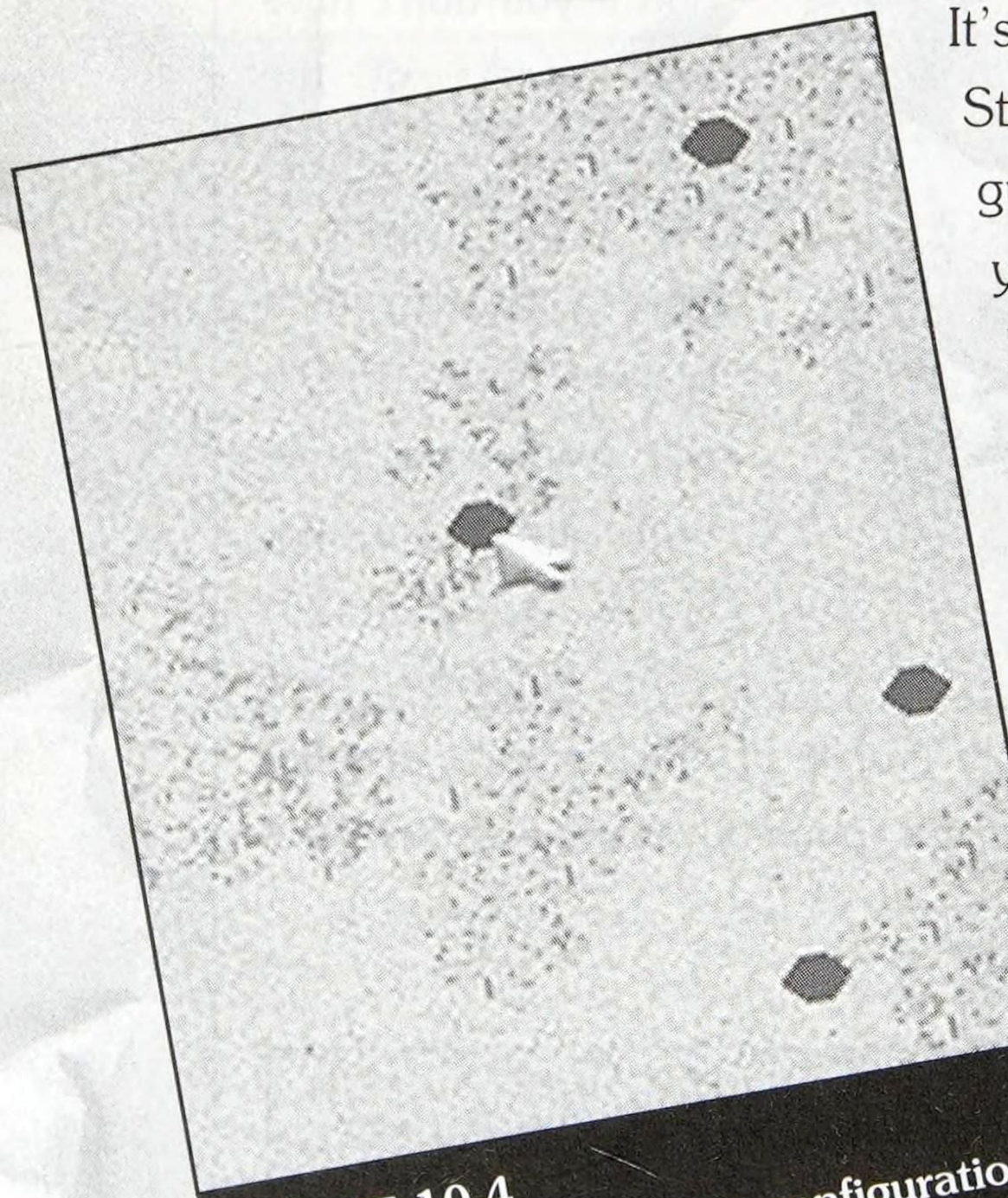


FIGURE 10-4.
One of the random map configurations of the Stranglevine Jungle.

It's bad enough that you next come to the Stranglevine Jungle. That you have to fight a guerrilla war here seems almost too much for your beleaguered army to bear (Figure 10-4). But you have the chance to grab that elusive engineer (who will allow you to finally repair your Mech units) *now*, rather than waiting until the end of the Avernion Campaign. The randomly generated map makes it difficult to stick to one strategy, but this isn't really a problem: Just kill all enemy units wherever and whenever you run into them.

Ssazikar's forces here consist of a lot of Heavy Infantry—Ratmen, Were-bears, and so on—and their sole reason for existence is to cause as much damage to your force as possible.

To this end, they will target high-experience and expensive units even more than usual. When you eliminate 80 percent of the enemy force, they will surrender; don't even *think* about not accepting. Here's what happens when you win:

1. You get 100 gold (if it's found in the Amazon, why not here?);
2. Shrike River Valley (the other scenario choice here) is liberated; and
3. If you win in fifteen turns or less, you have access to the Sunken Coast and Niels the Engineer, who can repair damaged Mech units (of course, you still have to win in the Sunken Coast). If you take sixteen turns or longer, Niels is temporarily whisked beyond your reach.

If you insist on fighting in the Shrike River Valley (and if you do you'll have to forgo Niels for now), Tables 10-7 and 10-8 give you an idea of what you may receive:

Table 10-7: Shrine of Cahdla Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
Auxiliary Unit	See Table 10-1	15%
Gold	See Table 9-6	70%
Empty Shrine	Nothing!	15%

Table 10-8: Spirit Well Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
For Warlord Marcas:		
Auxiliary Unit	See Table 10-1	50%
Gold	See Table 9-6	25%
Hero	See Table 10-9	25%
For Calis, Krell, and Mordra:		
Auxiliary Unit	See Table 10-1	60%
Gold	See Table 9-6	25%
Hero	See Table 10-9	15%

Table 10-9: Hero Recruitment

Hero	Chance to Receive
Sergeant	20%
Lieutenant	60%
Captain	20%

Also, stay away from the Troll Cave. It has a 50 percent chance of being totally empty; even if you do receive some gold, you have to fight Trolls—big surprise! Otherwise, your time in the river valley is limited, so that you are pressed to complete your objectives. This scenario has a real fantasy "Battle of the Bulge" feel, as you simply don't have time to investigate every single village. Instead, you must screen off the nonessential towns and their troops, blow a hole open on one of the road nets, and quickly exploit the opening with mobile forces.

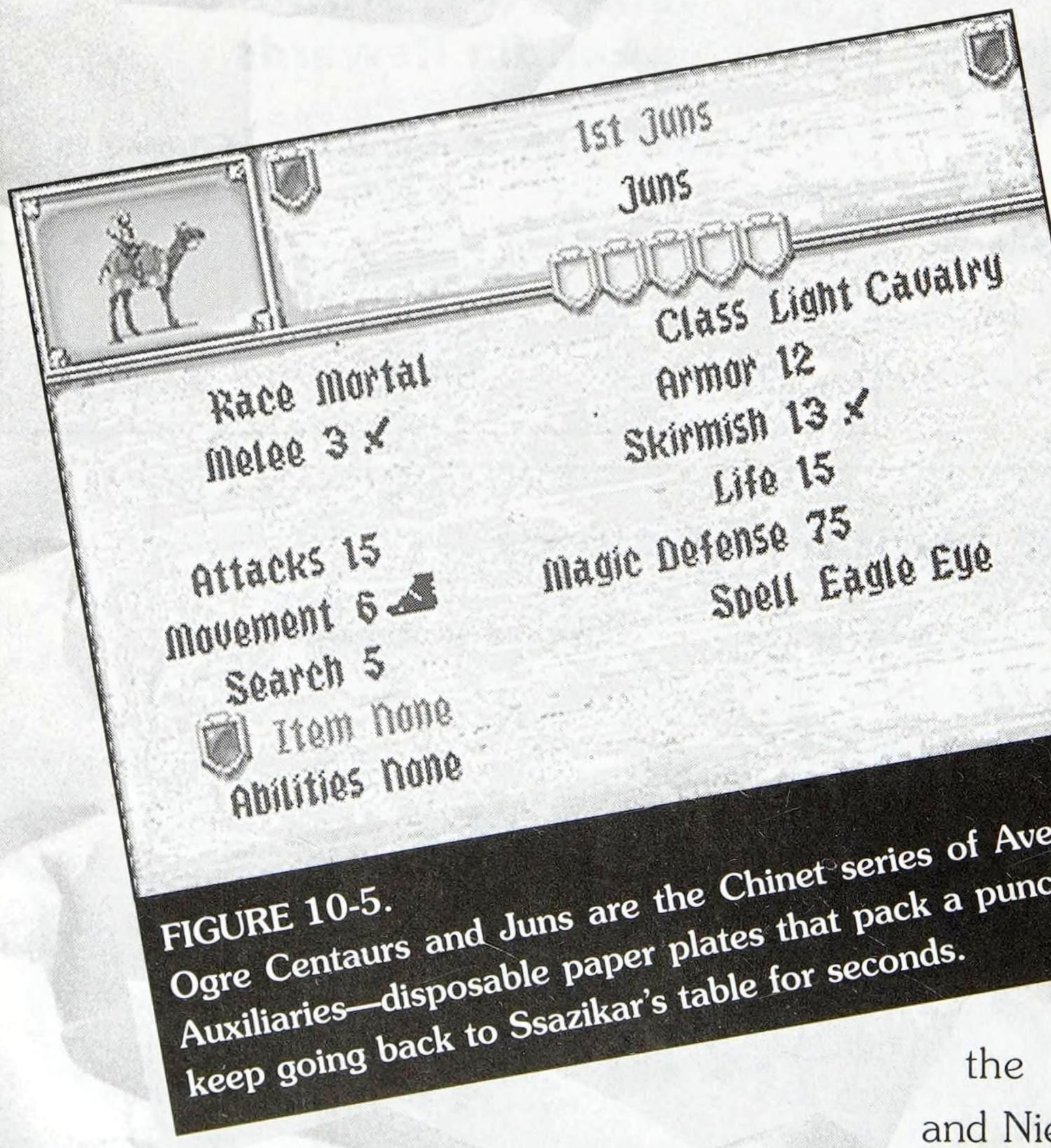


FIGURE 10-5.
Ogre Centaurs and Juns are the Chinet series of Avernion Auxiliaries—disposable paper plates that pack a punch and keep going back to Ssazikar's table for seconds.

One of the reasons that the Auxiliary forces on this continent are so heavily weighted toward Cavalry is so that you may hurl these fast and very expendable units down the northern roads, oblivious to all danger (see Figure 10-5). If you get the impression that Shrike River Valley is a rollicking, fun affair, it is. But the rewards are too shallow for the dangers you face. Worse, if you win Shrike River Valley, the Jungle scenario disappears, and Niels withers on the Stranglevine.

SUNKEN COAST

No, this isn't the California scenario. Ssazikar's forces are anything but laid back. Tactically, Sunken Coast is different because it contains one of the smallest—but hardest-hitting—forces you've faced since Keldonia. As a rule, the computer builds only Mech troops for this scenario, but it buys the Rolls-Royces: You won't be facing a spindly group of Rolling Men and Bronzemen here.

In fact, if you've gotten careless about watching the Specialization rule, you will find a battle-hardened corps of Rolling Forts and Iron Giants quite capable of crushing your army in its steely grip. The AI is specifically tuned for maximum aggression, and Ssazikar's troops won't falter until they take 80 percent losses. There are no significant points of interest except an occasional random shrine.

When you win, you get these wonderful prizes:

1. A new Steam Hawk Auxiliary;
2. A matching Air Slammer Auxiliary, with bronze trim;
3. Your own Engineer, Niels, to take care of your new Mech Air units; and
4. 150 gold for cruising money.

THE BACK DOOR

If you're feeling really cocky, you can attack the Bearded Mountains before the Sunken Coast. In principle, you merely have to defend the three villages of Ramblewood, Millbrook and Mairmont long enough to cause 80 percent casualties to Ssazikar's attacking force. But Ramblewood is out in the Thickened Vegetation Boonies, and its extreme distance from the other two victory hexes—see Figure 10-6—requires you to split your force.

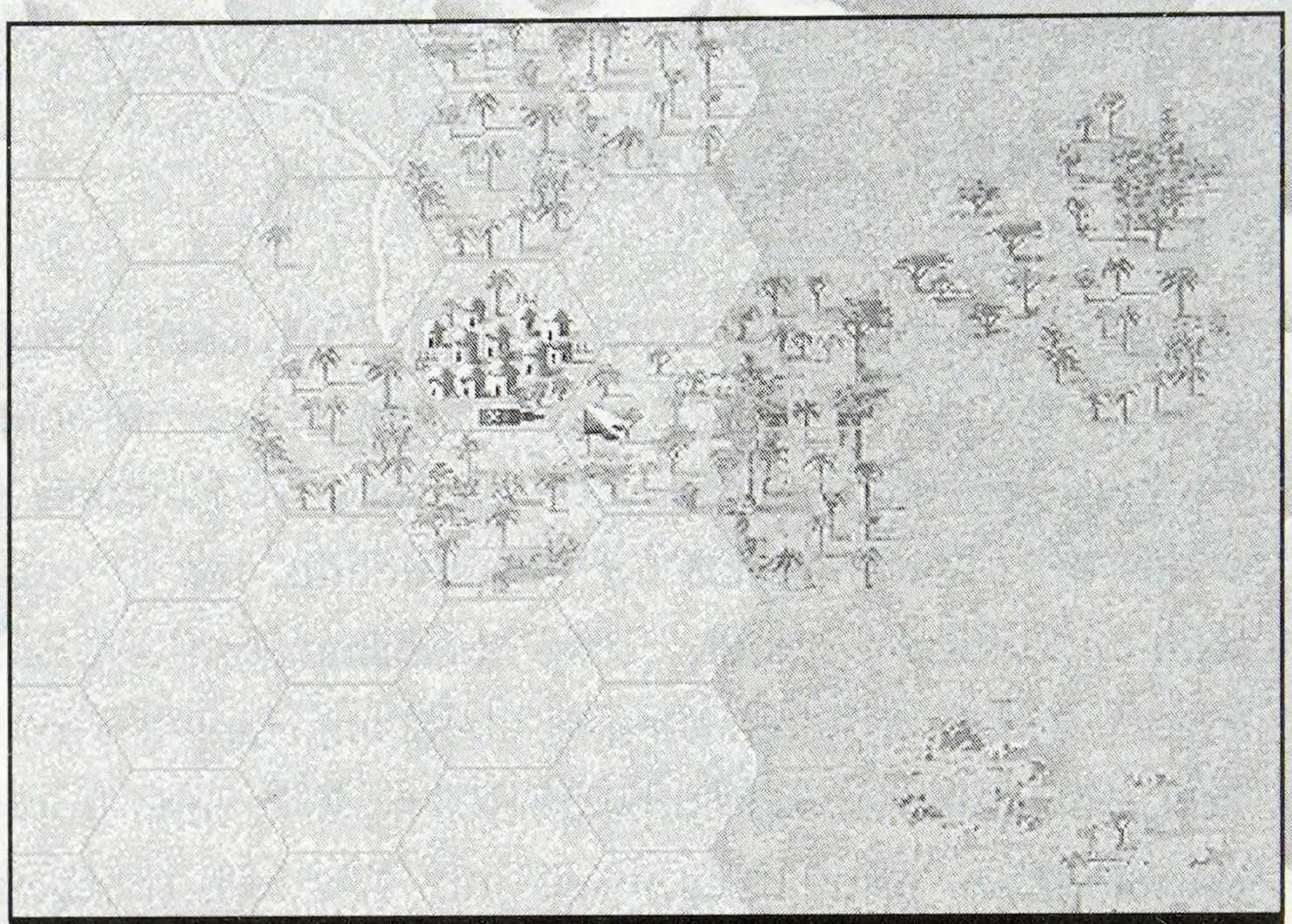


FIGURE 10-6.
Isn't it just like the Council to demand that you defend a far-flung village with no real strategic value? Can you say Stalingrad—I mean Ramblewood?

For such a dangerous undertaking, you should be rewarded. And you are, but the rewards aren't that substantial:

- *At the Altar of the Ravager, in addition to the colorful name, you automatically get a Basic Hero (see Table 10-9).*
- *The Shrine of the Staff gives you a 50-50 chance for a little gold or an Auxiliary.*
- *The Temple of the Storm gives you either Pathmastery or Mass Heal—guaranteed—for your entire army, but only for the remainder of the scenario. So why bother?*
- *The Shattered Shrine gives you either more gold (40), a Magic Item (40), or an "excellent" Magic Item (20). It's also just far enough away from your defenses that it's questionable as to whether it's worth attacking.*

The most irritating thing about this scenario is that you again have to win in fifteen turns; otherwise, Niels and company sail away until the end of the Avernion Campaign. Don't be tempted. Do not pass Go. Do not collect

the measly sum of 150 gold. Go straight to the Sunken Coast; you'll need the sunshine after slumming in the fens and swamps.

THUNDER & LIGHTNING

Thunder Plains sounds like a brand of rugged leisure wear for Marshal Calis, which isn't that far from reality. If Niels and Ferras have joined your happy family, then the AI is reduced to building mostly Cavalry units. But even this mobile force pales next to the force Ssazikar sends to Ravenscraw Downs, which consists almost entirely of Air units. According to how many Mech units you have, either of these can be easy scenarios to win (and once you win one of them, the other is liberated).

Of course, if you have Malric or Valira, go for the pole position at Ravenscraw Downs. Just take an extra Missile unit or two to make sure that enemy Bombardiers don't break through your defensive umbrella. Thunder Plains can be more dangerous because of the randomness of the scenario: If the AI happens to set up its Cavalry near major road nets, you are in for a tough fight.

In any case, when you eliminate the usual 80 percent of the computer's units, you get 150 gold, and your Army Maximum increases by two. Plus, roughly the right half of the continent is liberated. Enjoy the breather; it gets a lot harder from here on.

BUMMED IN THE BOG

Forget your other options and attack the Fellbourne Bogs. This battle is another epic conflict, one of those destined to have your every maneuver scrutinized by military historians and armchair generals for aeons to come.

If this isn't the single toughest scenario in the game, it's darn close, so make sure you prepare properly:

- *Get some grade-3 Heavy Infantry, especially ones that have Force March capability.*
- *Forget building more Cavalry, but already experienced Light Cavalry are okay.*
- *Foresters are great to cut off retreats; buy as many as you can afford.*
- *Buy Bombardiers!*
- *Go for mobility wherever possible.*

FIGURE 10-7.
If you want to penetrate the Bogs, Krindel is almost a necessity.

This bog makes some of the earlier swamps look like putting greens. To win, you must capture the Keep and Temple of the Veil, but the path is virtually impenetrable, especially as you push farther south (see Figure 10-7). There are, however, plenty of goodies, both magical and monetary, to be had all over this enchanted, festering land.

Table 10-10: Beacon Stones Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
For Warlord Marcas:		
Auxiliary Unit	See Table 10-1	20%
Gold	See Table 9-6	30%
Hero	See Table 10-9	35%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	15%
For Calis, Krell, or Mordra:		
Auxiliary Unit	See Table 10-1	35%
Gold	See Table 9-6	35%
Hero	See Table 10-9	15%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	15%

In addition, Welkin's Gate gives you either a Magic Item (75%) or gold (25%), while the Iron Feather Altar emphasizes gold over Magic Items by a 60-40 ratio. The Shrine of the Jade Snake, is the real find, however, where the unit that liberates the shrine has an 80 percent chance of the Jade Snake Teacher—shades of *Kung Fu*'s Caine—who bestows either a +2 bonus to primary Attack or to the number of Attacks. A rare gift, indeed.

Should you actually capture the Temple of the Veil, you get to "roll" on the Oodles of Gold Table (10-11).

Table 10-11: Oodles of Gold

Gold Amount	Chance to Receive
150	20%
160	20%
170	20%
180	20%
190	20%

If by chance you overcome all odds to win this scenario, here's what happens:

1. **Scouts agree to guide you through the remainder of this continent—in other words, you get Auxiliaries, but good ones.**
2. **You receive a purse of 200 gold. My, Ssazikar is careless with his money.**
3. **If you win within fifteen turns, the mists have a high probability of lifting to reveal a *hidden island*.**

The hidden island of Giant's Throw is Ssazikar's munitions dump and Royal Smokehouse. Before you can raid the Tennessee country hams and smoked dragon livers, however, you'll need to refit.

THE HIDDEN ISLE

If you've gotten this far, you've played very well, and you've gotten lucky. If you've ever played historical wargames, this scenario is reminiscent of an attack on Singapore or of the planned assault on Malta—the latter, ominously, was never carried out because it was considered too risky.

Cramped hardly begins to describe the setup. From only five hexes, you must explode from the northwest corner of the isle, fighting your way through mountainous terrain resembling that of Asphead. At least this time, your units are more experienced. Both you and the AI are limited in numbers of units, so it's pretty tough going. You'll need every trick at your disposal: ambushes, air strikes (Malric is a big help here), and you might even consider sacrificing a Cavalry or two in charges around the Witchfire Chantry Temple.

The sites of Wizard's Crown and King's Cairn possess the usual gold/magic fare. Hermit's Cave should be avoided, both because it's a waste of time and because it has a 20 percent chance of generating a random baddie to waste your time even more. Aside from the number of side quests you allow yourself, if you win, you gain:

1. 100 gold, which you'll need to replace losses; and
2. the Ranger Skill (see Chapter 7).

SWAMPS & MORE SWAMPS

You get three choices for your next battle, and there is no clear-cut favorite. Swamps, it seems, come in many different flavors, but none so dank as the Devouring Swamp. This huge battlefield features a tough defensive-minded enemy, and it has few benefits other than two more Auxiliary units, the usual gold, and a +2 Armor bonus at Dragon's Sink. Best to let this scenario go down the drain, along with the Ratmen, Cobramen, and other potential beasties waiting at the Black Diamond Altar (anyone crazy enough to stop for a drink at a place with that name deserves to be bounced by a Lionman).

Likewise, the Claw River Basin is another of those intriguing battles better left alone. Still, if you need some crash 'n' bash to go with your jungle fiber diet, this is a real slugfest.

No, the place you really want to go is the Shattered Mountains, which aren't so broken that they can't impede your path. Generally, the AI builds a lot of

Light Infantry. My suggestion is to counter with Heavy Infantry, Skirmishers, and Air units. If you win within eighteen turns, you get:

1. **The Cloak of Hiding—makes any unit a Scout, effectively;**
2. **The Ring of Free Movement, which lets you treat all terrain as open; and**
3. **150 gold—Ssazikar isn't broke yet, but his economy is shattered.**

MORE RANDOM VEGETATION

The Misty Plain, Venomroot Jungle, and Toadskin Fells are all randomly generated scenarios, with the latter sporting more rough than twisted terrain. If you have Cavalry, attack in the Misty Plains; Rangers, infiltrate the Fells; Ring of Free Movement and/or Light Infantry, swing through the Jungle. There's little of note in any of these battles other than the 150 gold installment plan the Council has you on.

SSAZIKAR'S FINAL SETBACK

It's really a good idea to take out Cloven Foot Pass before you jump the Serpent's Cauldron, since the towns overlap between the two scenarios. The computer actually checks to see if you won them in the other battle before it sets up its army for the next. The 250 gold you receive for winning Cloven Pass doesn't hurt either.

You have plenty of time to win the scenario, so make sure to visit the kindly old Dwarven Blacksmith at the Shrine of Kelvan—he'll give your unit a +2 to all weapons. Most everything else is the common gold/item mix, except that

the Cave of Winds is a known Ogre/Ratmen hangout. When you finally kick Ssazikar's tail (literally, if you prefer), you are handsomely rewarded:

1. You get 350 gold—the Council must have taken out a loan;
2. Your Army Maximum increases by three (four if you are playing the Warlord); and
3. If you have Ferras but no Engineer, Niels finally joins your army.

Build lots of Mechs; you'll need them on the next continent. At least you'll be finished with the jungle...

CHAPTER 11

Skating on Thin Ice

Putting the Maloch on Pothia

You've left Dragga crying in his Orcish beer, reduced Aelcar to a sniveling Sorcerer, and tied a permanent knot in Ssazikar the Snake's tail. Now you meet Maloch, a sadist of such proportions that he makes your other opponents seem like a group of drunken Goblins on a cow-tipping raid.

WINTER NOT-SO-WONDERLAND

Unlike other continents, you don't have the luxury of a starting base in the Kingdom of Pothia. The first scenario dumps you right into the Ice Fields of Noirraneskap. You face a situation similar to that of the Normans at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Should you fail, your army, with its back to the sea, will be destroyed.

Maloch has a better army than Ssazikar, with a lot of grade-4 units. If you fall prey to the Specialization rule, you will face the best units the Shadowlord has at his disposal, so take special care to avoid this fate, at least in the first few scenarios on Pothia.

This doesn't mean you have to build a vanilla army—quite the contrary. The battlefield is huge, and the five setup areas give you a lot of flexibility to maneuver. Cavalry is a must, as are Heavy Infantry with Force March ability. Since having only one or two types of grade-4 units shouldn't push you over the Specialization line, you should strongly consider Samurai units—you'll need the extra firepower. A few Legionarii are also good because their Pikes will negate Maloch's Cavalry charges across the snowy plains.

Now that you have an Engineer (provided that you picked up Ferras in the Isle of the Four Winds), you should concentrate on Mech units. If you haven't

researched at least grade-3 Mech units by now, you will have a tougher time getting through Maloch's forces. You can still win most of the scenarios with good play, but you are going to miss out on some of the major victories—your forces simply won't be able to hit as hard and as fast as they could with Mechs.

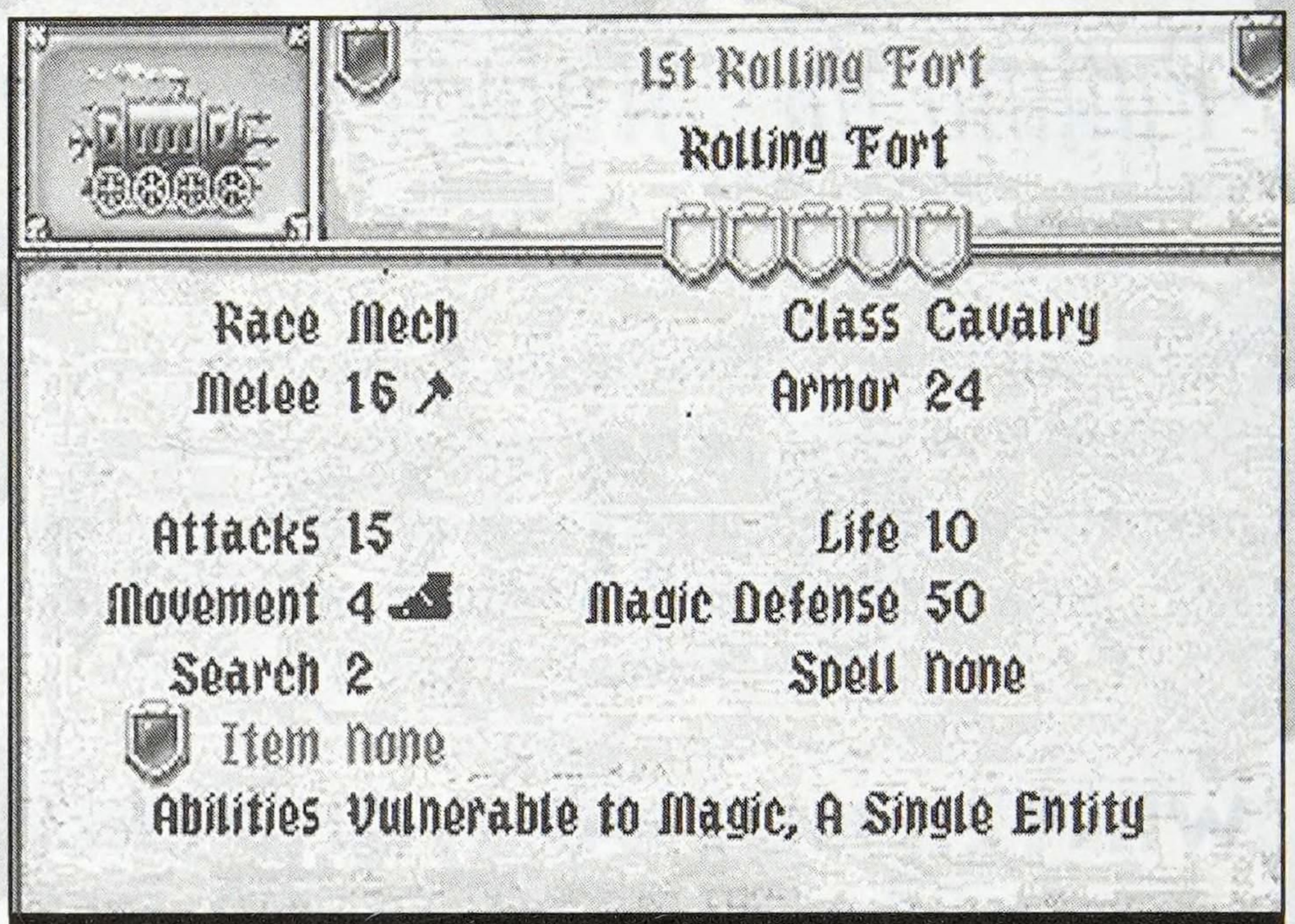


FIGURE 11-1.
Mechs are a must—get those tread-heads rolling down the roads of Pothia from the very first turn.

FROZEN TALES OF WOE

The reason that you start out in such bad shape is that the expeditionary force sent to maintain a foothold on the continent basically slumped to an icy doom. What that gives you is an incredible opportunity to reap a harvest of rewards, both in terms of men and *materiel*.

Your first task is to capture the southern Tower of Estine. The key is to have your group large enough to do this without wasting time, but not so large that the rest of your advance bogs down. When you eliminate the opposition around the Tower, place one, or preferably two, Iron Giants next to the Tower, backed by a good Missile unit (even a Longbow is okay, so long as it's

Are Mechs Worth the Price?

Since you can't build a grade-2 or grade-4 Mech—they don't exist—the obvious question comes up: Why build these things, anyway? Grade-1 Mechs are pretty much paper plates, but once you graduate to grade-3 and grade-5, Mechs are very effective, especially the Siege and Heavy Infantry units. Let's compare the research costs of grade-3 Heavy Infantry units across the entire range:

Unit	Type	Research Cost	Purchase Price	Melee	Armor
Iron Giant	Mech	307	46	20	28
Legionarii	Mortal	280	60	19	23
Earth Elemental	Magical	294	65	24	22
Lionmen	Beast	287	53	23	25

When you look at total research cost, the Iron Giant would cost 27 more than the least-expensive Mortal Legion, a difference of almost 10 percent. But at an actual cost of 46 for the Mech to 60 for the Mortals, you'd make good on your investment as soon as you bought two Mech units.

So don't be a bean counter—buy at least three Mech units to fill out your higher Army Maximum when you begin the Pothian campaign. Don't go overboard, either. Magical units, as you can see from the comparison above, still have the most offensive punch, while Mortal units tend to have the best balance between melee and defense. Both complement the higher movement and armor capabilities of the Mechs quite well. And Beasts are very affordable, cost less to research, and hold their own even though they can't upgrade. Then again, if you aren't Mordra, Beasts don't do you a lot of good (enjoy them when you get them for Auxiliaries).

experienced) and two Siege engines. The Iron Giants' high Armor rating will keep them from sustaining a lot of damage, and the Siege modifiers will quickly reduce the defender in the Tower.

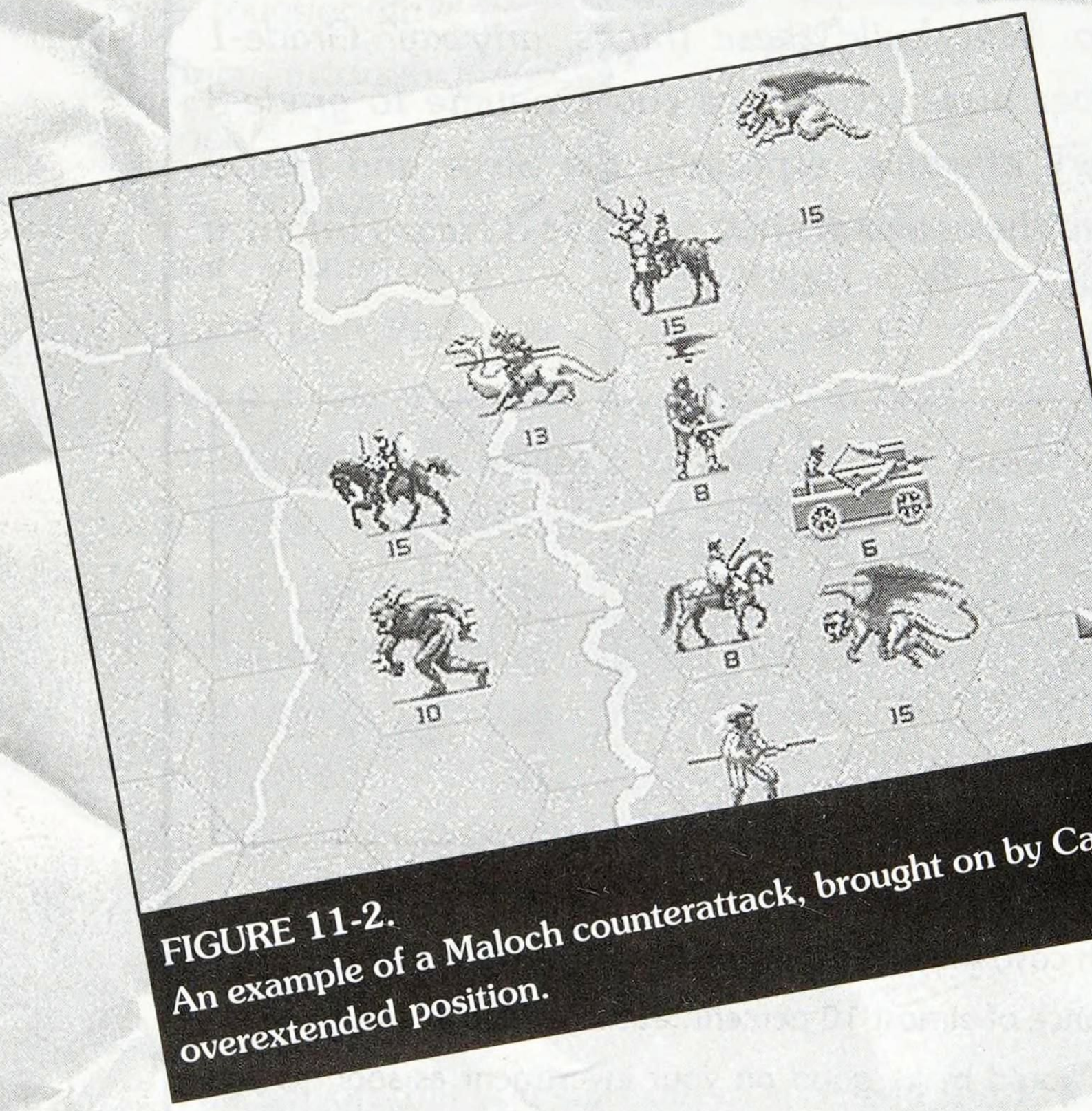


FIGURE 11-2.
An example of a Maloch counterattack, brought on by Calis's overextended position.

Regardless of how many of the startup areas you choose to set up in, you should limit yourself to a three-pronged attack. Otherwise, your units are spread so thin that they are ripe for a Maloch counter-thrust. The AI here tends to be flexible and practical: while it wants to delay your advance, it won't go into a defensive shell as it did in some of the randomly generated scenarios of Avernion.

Table 11-1: Mouth of Mercy Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
Gold	See Table 9-3	50%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	10%
Auxiliary Unit	See Table 11-3	40%

Treats are there for the taking, but not at the villages. If you have the time, you might want to spelunker through the Mouth of Mercy, but consider the following first:

The fun part is that regardless of whether you choose door number 1, 2, or 3, you also have the dubious pleasure of *automatically* meeting with enemy Shadows —so decide whether that 10 percent chance for a Magic Item is worth it before going in.

The Stones of Passage have a much lower profile. But they really aren't out of your way, and they don't have Shadows hanging out looking for wayward Council troops:

Table 11-2: Stones of Passage Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
Gold	See Table 9-3	30%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	30%
Shrine is Empty	Nothing	10%
Auxiliary Unit	See Table 11-3	30%

The chance to have as many as 40 total units in your army, counting Heroes and Auxiliaries, is very tempting, especially for Mordra and Krell; but don't get distracted from your goal—keep moving forward toward those Towers!

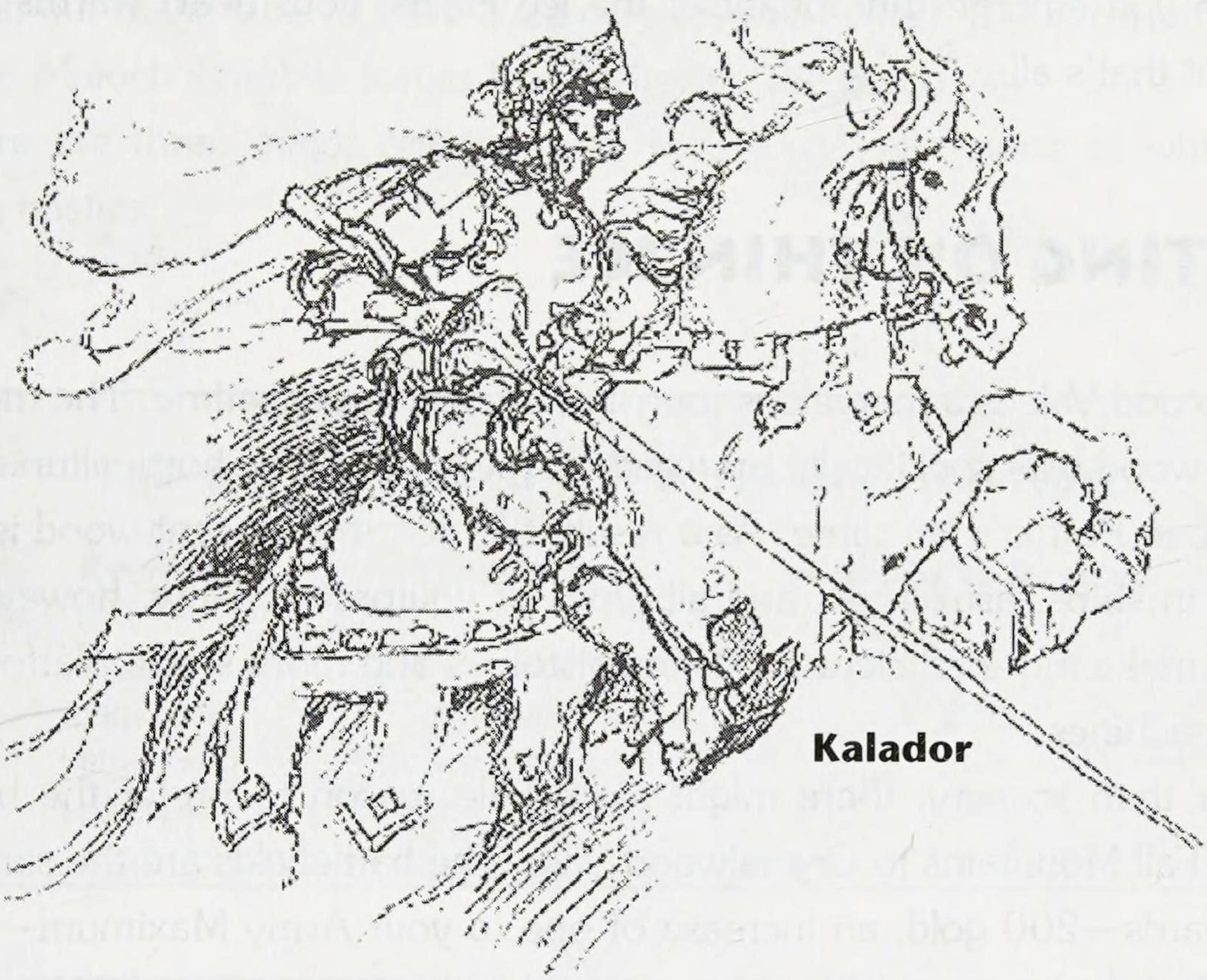
Table 11-3: Pothian Auxiliaries

Automatically receive one of the following Auxiliaries:

Unit	Type	Marcas	Calis	Krell	Mordra
Ashiguers	Lt. Infantry	20%	10%	10%	5%
Legionarii	Hvy. Infantry	20%	10%	15%	10%
Huntsmen	Skirmishers	10%	10%	5%	10%
Earth Elemental	Hvy. Infantry	5%	5%	10%	20%
Turtle Dragon	Cavalry	10%	15%	20%	20%
Ogre Centaurs	Cavalry	15%	25%	15%	10%
Gunners	Archer	10%	10%	10%	15%
Silver Hawks	Sky Hunter	10%	15%	15%	10%

No big surprises here, as Krell continues to have better success with Magic units than Mortal (he should take a few management and communication courses), and Calis stocks up on Cavalry. Mordra can use all the help she can get by this point in the game, so the high likelihood of recruiting high-powered units like Earth Elementals are a boon; the Griffons are just okay.

The reason for fast movement in this scenario is that Maloch has a lot of gold to spend on reinforcements, and if you spend too much time within the first seven or eight turns, the enemy troops will have built up around the victory Towers to the point where you won't be able to toss Maloch out of the victory hexes. Another reason to make tracks is that if you capture the Sacred Temple of Cargass (along the west of the battlefield) by turn ten, you automatically recruit Sir Kalador; and if you capture the Temple between turns eleven and fifteen, you have a 60 percent chance of gaining the good knight's services. Otherwise, you end up fighting Grippers (Skirmish of 20) for no reward whatsoever. Sir Kalador, however, is well worth the risk.



Kalador

Hero Showcase

Sir Kalador is the brave commander who failed to keep the Council's Citadel on Pothia safe from Maloch's treachery. But this brave knight deserves a chance to redeem his honor rather than become dinner for a band of Grippers:

Melee	Armor	MR	Class	Spell	Ability
22	25	80	Cavalry	Dispel Undead	Mystic

Kalador is immune to spells, and you will sorely need him to Dispel the Undead on the final two continents.

When you emerge triumphant at the Ice Fields, your heart warms to 250 gold, but that's all!...

SKATING ON THIN ICE

Crystalwood Vale is a marvelous tourist attraction in peacetime. The magically treated wood was specifically nurtured by the great Elven horticulturist Riglef to thrive in Pothia's icy clime. As a result, the near-translucent wood is prized for use in ships, astrolabes, and all types of equipment. Now, however, it is used to make more efficient sights for pistoliers and more stable platforms for Siege machines.

Other than scenery, there might seem little reason to prefer the battle of Glacier Fall Mountains to Crystalwood Vale. The battlefields are the same size, the rewards—200 gold, an increase of one to your Army Maximum—are the same. Both feature rugged terrain and roughly the same enemy force mix. This is a little misleading, however.

Crystalwood asks that you capture the Keeps of Crystalwood, Orehills, and Solehill, in addition to liberating the villages of Arwell, Harbath, and Durshan. The only extra reward to receive is Basic gold, a Basic Hero, or an Auxiliary unit at the Altar of Landah. If you're crazy enough to enter the Centaur Burial Grounds, you pick up an Excellent Magic Item, but you have to fight an enemy squadron of Centaur Knights (a grade-5 Beast), who are angry that you are defiling their sacred dead—not a very heroic thing to be doing. If you insist on fighting Crystal battles, at least go to the Circle of Vashalion and pick up some more gold.

Glacier Fall, however, offers better rewards. Sure, you have to capture three Towers here also, but the other major requirement, defending two villages, is a lot easier than taking three opposing villages. Use the same tactics against the

Towers, but make sure to have a Cavalry reserve—Mech if you can afford it—to keep Maloch's mobile forces from relieving the Siege.

There are three major reward spots in Glacier Falls, none of which have hidden nasties:

Table 11-4: Circle of Vermilion Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
Gold	See Table 9-3	35%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	35%
Better Hero	See Table 11-7	10%
Auxiliary Unit	See Table 11-3	20%

Table 11-5: Hall of the Wyrm Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
More Gold	See Table 9-6	25%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	50%
Excellent Magic Item	See Table 9-8	25%

Table 11-6: Cragmar Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
More Gold	See Table 9-6	100%

Table 11-7: Better Heroes

Hero	Melee	Armor	MR	Movement	Spotting	Spells	Chance to Receive
Captain	24	24	75	3 (Open)	3	Force March	75%
General	27	28	75	3 (Open)	3	Force March	25%

Ah, this is indeed a heroic adventure when even Generals lead from the front lines. Either of these fine leaders will inspire your army with their Heroism (+10 to Morale), and their Force March ability lets them move quickly, even in the rough terrain of Glacier Fall Mountains.

ENGORGED

If you've taken my advice and bypassed Crystalwood Vale, then you will miss the "pleasure" of fighting hex-by-hex through Wyrm Gullet Gorge. This is a defender's paradise, with plenty of broken terrain and a nasty mix of Maloch's better units. If you are honor-bound to slug your way through this hellhole, plan on losing a couple of units. You will receive the following at the Lotd Arches (no, I don't know how to pronounce it, either):

Table 11-8: Lotd Arches Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
Increased # of Attacks	+1	20%
Increased Armor Rating	+2	20%
Increased Primary Attack	+2	20%
Increased Experience	1/2 level	20%
Increased Search Range	+1	20%

The result is limited to one ability/one unit total. Also, at the Tomb of Balic, you get more gold, and Ferra's Mine and Ursa's Cavern run the usual gamut of gold/items/troops.

AN ICY RECEPTION EVERYWHERE

After Glacier Fall Mountains, you find yourself in the mysterious Verikan Tundra, which changes with each battle. After defeating the customary 80 percent of the enemy forces, you receive 200 gold and an Auxiliary Javelinmen unit.

Then you have a choice of going to Wyrm Gullet Gorge (see description above), the Deadwood Marches, or the Blue Fang Ice Shelf. Deadwood isn't quite a dead-end, but it requires that you fight a difficult defense against Maloch's forces while simultaneously attacking the Blizzard Keep and capturing four villages, all for typical awards.

Instead, sink your teeth into Blue Fang. Yes, you still have to defend two villages, but your army is large enough by now that you can run essentially two battles from opposite sides of the map. Cavern of Riversdeep, Serpent Altar, and Berin's Shrine are a bit heavy on the gold probabilities, but they are right on the way to your victory hexes, with no hidden bad guys. Grab your 250 gold from the Council for winning and move on.

RANDOM IS THE DAY

Remember the big decision you made at the beginning of the continent? More proof that you should take the easier path is that all four potential battles you now face are the same: randomly generated. The Pharenian Steppes are the most straightforward, but you must eliminate 85 percent of the enemy units to force a surrender. The Grey Hills, Shadows Peak Mountains, and the Mist

Valley require the usual 80 percent of enemy casualties to meet with victory. Shadows Peak does give you an extra 250 gold for your victory (it *is* harder to dig Ogre Knights out of the rugged terrain), rather than the 200 awarded upon winning the other three scenarios.

WHAT TO AVOID

Stay away from Ravenwoods; it's just another in a series of random scenarios with a 200 gold purse. Similarly, the Gravewind Mountains are just more fodder for the forces of Chaos, although there is the novelty of taking on a force composed mostly of Cavalry.

A bigger and more dangerous *cul de sac* occurs if you tackle the southern coastal route through the Ice Cauldron Mountains. Should you capture the Temple of Ceros Mar by turn fourteen, you gain the services of Xyphon—this suave spy has captured plans belonging to Maloch, which lock you into a climactic battle in the Harbinger Valley. This is true even if you find the stolen plans on Xyphon's dead body on turn fifteen or later.

While you're skiing around the Ice Cauldron Mountains, don't waste time at the Altar of Despair, since it has about a third of a chance of being empty. Make sure to visit the old Witches of the Stone Circle, though. Watching them cast fear on your enemies is a Halloween treat indeed.

Harbinger itself is a real scrap: Maloch's forces are largely composed of very experienced grade-4 units. They attack with even more ferocity than usual, so make sure you have good defensive units: experienced Missile-users and a couple of Legionarii and Iron Giants, if possible.

You must defend six villages and capture three others. If you lose just one village, and fail to capture it during your turn, you will *immediately* lose the

scenario. Defend first, expand later. The happy denizens whom you've defended reward you as follows:

- *Sanctuary of Talkiar gives you either a Basic Hero (if you have less than five) or an Auxiliary unit of Gunners that it has been shielding.*
- *Cavern of Remorse feels sorry enough for you to give you either More Gold (60%) or a Magic Item (40%).*
- *Harper's Cavern adds 10 to your unit's Morale and it brings it back to normal (if depleted).*

For my money, the whole Ice Cauldron Mountains/Harbinger is a waste of time and effort for gold ranging from 450 to 660, with a Basic Hero and maybe Xyphon thrown in for good measure.

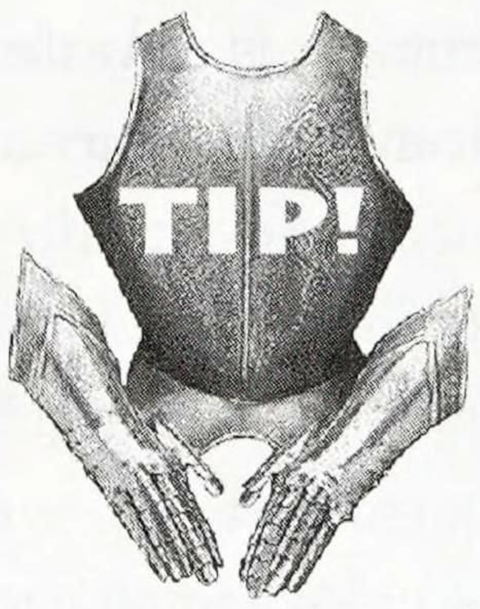
CLEARING OUT THE FLOTSAM

Shard Plains of Srael is a *fun* scenario. It has the best trap (see list below), a very capable enemy force to defeat, and an accelerated rate of reinforcements for Maloch that borders on the maniacal. Despite the odds, this scenario is winnable. It just requires that you move forward constantly and take a lot of chances. As we've stated before, *Panzer/Allied General* veterans are just going to have to come to grips with losing a unit here and there.

I like to strike through Hartica and Blackwater, hitting Riversbend Keep from the back side as well as the front. It's also prudent to take Fairview, so that reinforcing Northstar Keep is tougher for Maloch.

There are booby-trapped goodies to be had:

- *Druid's Grove has a near-equal chance for a Basic or Better Magic Item, but either is guarded by Druids (big surprise).*
- *Silk Cavern automatically gives you both a pile of More Gold and a Basic Magic Item. This is to lure you into the den of an angry Black Dragon, who is maxxed out in terms of experience. Enjoy your Magic Items, and may you be lucky enough to keep them.*



Areas named after Demons, Dragons, Undead creatures, the Shadowlord's girlfriend, and so on, are generally not places you want your Grandmother–or your best troops–to visit. If you are the kind of person who awakens spiders to see if they have a red hourglass on their underside, at least use an Auxiliary unit when you enter questionable areas. Alternatively, send in a unit that already has a minor Magic Item, so that the really cool one will be miraculously sent back to headquarters.

When you finally win Shard Plains of Srael, the following occurs:

1. You bag 250 gold;
2. You receive another Auxiliary unit; and
3. You learn how to properly pronounce Srael.

SCALING THE WALL

Your next task is to capture Burel's Wall. It's an intimidating scenario, but the opportunities are worth the risk. Ravener's Shrine and Winter Ring are the typical mixture of ice, gold, and Magic Items, but the Temple of the White Crow will have Maloch eating crow, after you make off with the Sword of Open Wounds (works like a Conjurer's Death Wounds spell)—just watch out for the Mummy guarding it.

When you capture *all seven towers and the castle*, you are richly rewarded:

1. You get 350 gold;
2. You get a Magical Javelin (+4 Skirmish); and
3. Your Army Maximum is increased by two.

With the fall of Burel's Wall, you have now liberated over half of Pothia. Several possible battles lay before you, but the best choice is to go for the jugular. The Rimescape Mountains, Mirrored Plains, Rumenea, and the Forest of Silent Winds (doesn't that title just say "ambush"?) are all random scenarios—don't go to any of them unless death for minimal gain is your *raison d'être*.

Instead, go to Boreal Vale, where Dreng (the Dumb) has declared his independence from Maloch. Dreng's forces are fairly experienced, but he didn't exactly get the cream of the crop from Maloch's army. Most of the units you face are Werebears, Boar Riders, Griffons, and the like. While this might have been a problem on say, Avernion, your much stronger force on this continent should make Were-stew of these enemies.

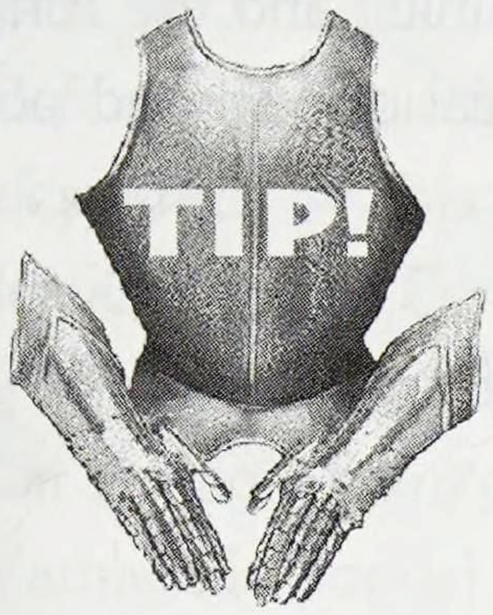
Once you cripple Dreng's mobile Cavalry force, he has little with which to keep you from Lyreneck Tower or Boreal Aerie (Boreal is a Keep, by the way). The penitent Champion will be sure to worship at all area shrines:

- *Watcher's Shrine gives you a 60 percent chance for a Magic Item, otherwise gold.*
- *Wolfgar Altar is equally split between rewards of +10 Morale or +1 Search for the liberating unit.*
- *Bear Cave (it's a shrine for bears, okay?) gives either Basic gold (20%), a Griffon Auxiliary (40%), or a Magic Bow (40%).*

Beating Dreng doesn't add much to your honor, or your pocketbook, but it is a nice breather—and it liberates the random scenarios discussed above.

BAITING THE WOLF

Wolfshead Valley can be a nail-biter of a scenario. Maloch's attack is as fierce as that of any cornered wolf. You must defend Drued Keep (Drueds are a group that split from the Druids centuries ago and took refuge on this icy continent) and four of the seven villages you own at the start of the scenario. Since you can actually lose a village or two and still win, don't try to fight for every single hex. Maloch's attacking force comes in from the west, amply supported by Sky Hunters and Bombardiers. Form Porcupine defenses to protect villages close to the Keep, with Siege units and Sky Hunters nearby to provide anti-air fire. Employ lines of interior defense, with Cavalry groups massed between villages, so that they may counterattack to close breaches in the defense. Once you cause 80 percent casualties, Maloch's army will break and run; don't be cocky, accept the surrender.



Don't commit all of your units in the setup. Hold a half-dozen back and drop them in after you see where Maloch's biggest threat is launched from. If you cut it too close, though, you'll lose a village, since you can't place a unit in a village (or any other placement zone) if there is an enemy unit adjacent.

Once Maloch's forces are beaten down, make a sortie into the enemy-held Shrine of the Wolf:

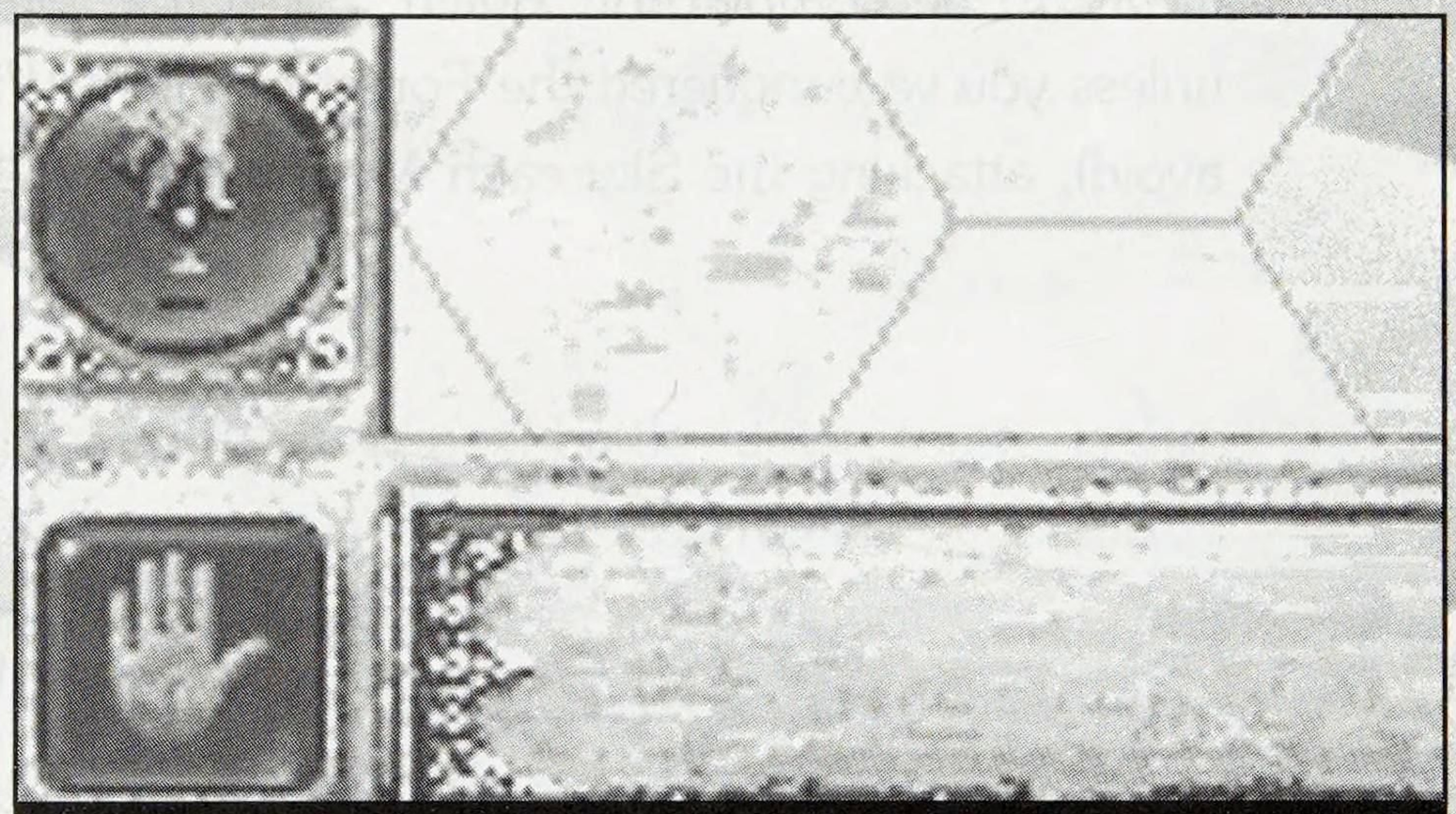


FIGURE 11-3.
Use the placement button to place your "secret" units—those you've held back until Maloch commits his forces.

Table 11-9: Shrine of the Wolf Rewards

Reward	Chance to Receive
Staff of Winds	35%
Storm Staff	35%
Ring of Regeneration	30%

Both staffs are effective even against powerful Shadow units, and the Ring of Regeneration allows any unit to move/fight and still Heal one wound per turn—a great boon for Heroes.

MALOCH REACHES FOR RELIEF

Even after you've broken the offensive might of Maloch's army, you can't afford to be complacent. Again, avoid the southern regions like the plague: unless you've conquered the Forest of Silent Winds (which you really want to avoid), attacking the Skyreach Mountains *is* a "reach," as you are ambushed on three sides by tons (literally) of Mech units; you might pick up another Staff (Fatigue, Healing, or Fire-balls) at the Sker's Eye, but you suffer an Earthquake spell—even a Californian like me would pass on this scenario.

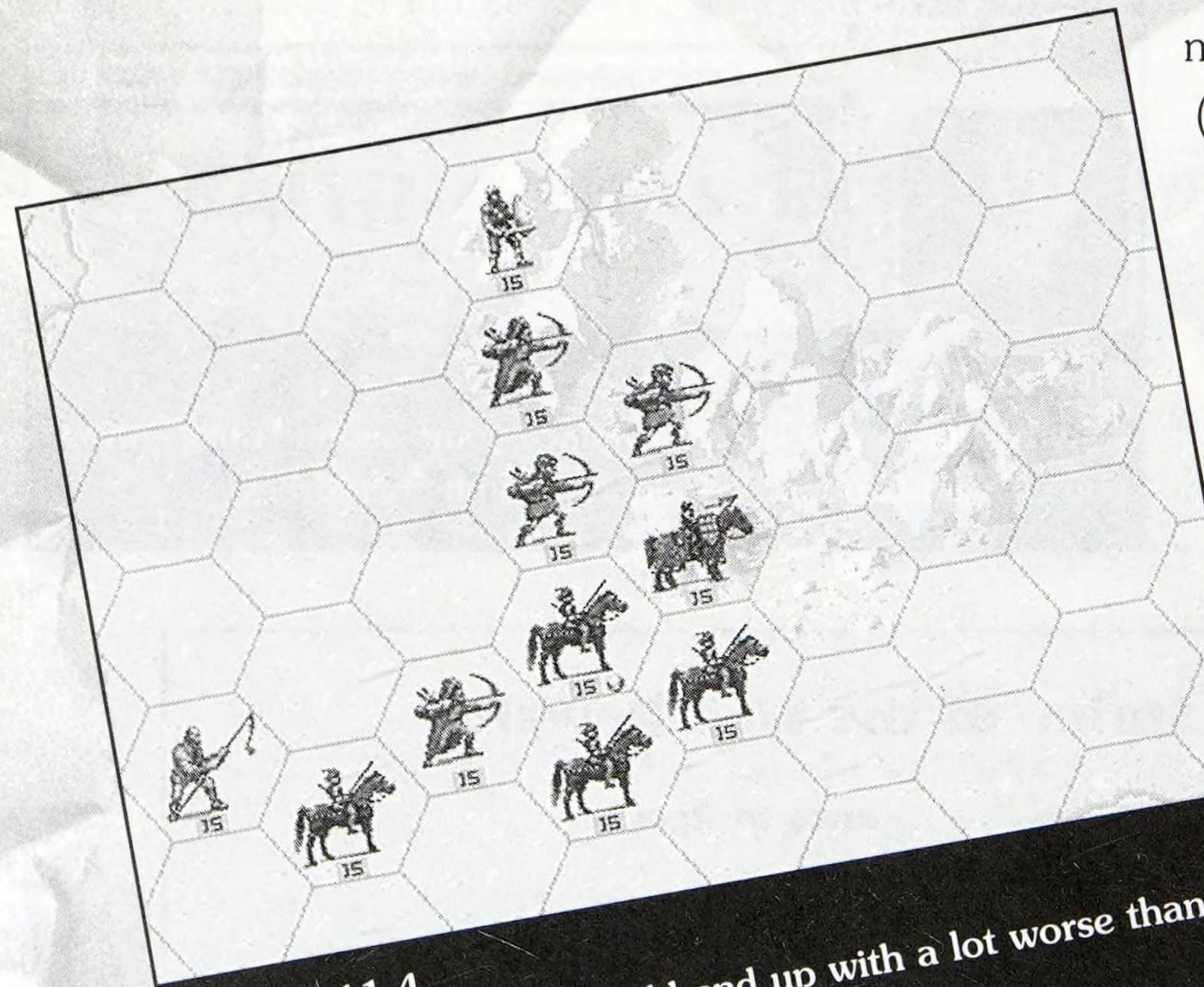


FIGURE 11-4.
Don't tempt fate: you could end up with a lot worse than a ski injury at the Skyreach Mountains.

No, you're better off climbing the Gaothaire Heights. By now, you should have a veteran core of units capable of dealing even with the odd Shadow Warrior that Maloch throws at you. The

best way to take care of these excellent units is to hold them at bay with defensive Missile fire while you polish off their support units. Maloch is usually desperate by this point, and by turn four or five has exhausted his attack, leaving you to Force March your way to Black Iron Keep.

As far as rewards are concerned, Weeping Stone Altar gives a 50-50 chance for a Magic Item/gold, while Hawkspyre Cairn adds +10 Morale (and restores damaged Morale) to the liberating unit. The Temple of Despair, strangely enough, is bad news only for Maloch—it gives you a roll on the "Oodles of Gold Table" (Table 10-11).

MALOCH THE MISERLY

If you've totally ignored my advice so far, your next battle "down south" is Scar Valley. For only 350 gold—assuming you win by turn fifteen—you face a veteran army composed mainly of Mech and grade-4 Magic units. The only reasonable reward for this carnage is a potential basic Hero and a fair amount of gold at Clarie's Ring and the Wanderer's Stone, respectively. Mossbeard's Shrine does grant +2 Armor, if you are so inclined. If you win the scenario after turn fifteen, you get a paltry 200 gold—talk about unappreciated Champions!

What you need to do is take your finely honed army into the Whip River Valley and "crack it" over Maloch's head. For a major victory, you must still win in fifteen turns, but this is no hollow victory. When Thunder Falls, Drearwood, Broadmoor, and the Keep of Ravenswatch fall, not only will you have prevented Maloch from investing in the most depressingly named real estate in all of Aer, you will also cut his funding from the Shadowlord by *half* for the final confrontation. You also pick up 350 gold and a suit of Magic Armor at no extra charge.

Lest we forget, you should also visit the following:

- *At the Shrine of Father Oak, a Druid (or Drued in disguise) lets you cast Fatigue on enemy troops because you remind her of her grandson.*
- *At the Crystal Cave, you are met by a frostbitten basic Hero who either recovers enough to join you or gives you a Basic Magic Item.*
- *The Altar of the Cygnet is a busy place: turn ten or earlier gives you More Gold and a Magic Item, with a free Orc Longbow to attack you; turn eleven or later means no Orc, no Magic, and a smattering of gold.*

MANDRAGORA STEPPES

Maloch always saw himself as a bit of a dragonlord, which is probably why he was so jealous of Malric, and it's certainly the reason he settled his Castle in the Mandragora Steppes. Even if you didn't manage to cut Maloch's forces in half, this is not the most difficult scenario to win. The Steppes offer plenty of maneuvering room for your army. Eventually, you will breach the wall and throw units galore through it to exploit the evil one's position. If you were able to limit Maloch's income, the end could come as early as turn fourteen, since the wall will be sparsely defended—Maloch just has to have a mobile force. Tie it down, and take out his ill-defended base.

The rewards are ripe for the plucking:

- *Fleetstone and the Duke Anvil are Magic Item rich.*
- *The Ice Cave forces you to fight an Ogre Knight or Steam Hawk (or, occasionally, another random enemy unit) for your gold/Magic Item.*
- *The Phoenix Shrine brings all deaths within the units of your army back from the dead.*

✤ *If you have been so unfortunate that you have the services of neither Valira nor Krindel, the Temple of Eibhlian gives you an 80 percent chance of gaining one of the two—or "Oodles" of gold (Table 10-11).*

When you win the final battle, you get to see Maloch whimper—always a treat—and you get 500 gold from the normally miserly Council. Your Army Maximum also increases by two. Buy some grade-5 units if you can; you'll need them when you reach the next continent.

CHAPTER 12

Smoldering Volcano

Island-hopping Through the Dragonscale Archipelago

As the wind generated by the magicians brushes across the nape of your neck, the small hairs protest, sensing this is no normal breeze. The sails of your flagship, however, care little about the wind's origin, natural or supernatural—they billow and ripen with an intensity that strains the ship's masts.

You would have preferred to come in under the vessel's own power, but the eerie calm in the Northern Sea has left you little choice. The note from the Council of Five was terse, pointed and paranoid as ever: "Sail north and destroy the Shadowlord's power base with all speed, lest all our gains come to naught."

But you would have made haste with or without the Council's order. The Shadowlord could hardly be pleased at the continued failure of his lieutenants: Maloch, his most trusted aide, had disappointed the Evil One far more than Ssazikar, especially since he had been provided with plenty of assistance from Fire Isle. Thus, the Shadowlord's anger had stilled the waters and filled the air with the acrid stench of newly erupting volcanoes. But none of this prepared the soldiers for what they now glimpsed on the horizon. A new series of islands had formed off the coast of Fire Isle, another blight on the landscape brought about by the Shadowlord's might, magic, and unmatched arrogance. And you chuckle, thinking of how happy you were to be leaving the snowy wastes of Pothia behind you...

ISLAND HOPPING

The Dragonscale Archipelago is a daisy chain of islands that forms a natural hiding place for all manner of evil denizens. You simply don't have time to capture every single island, so learn from Douglas MacArthur's example in World War II—capture the most important islands and let the resistance wither on the islands you bypass. Of course, your ability to select battles is somewhat limited by the plotline, but you still have a lot of control over your own destiny.

THOSE BLEEDIN' MOUNTAINS

Your first task is to intervene in the civil war taking place in the Bleeding Mountains. While it is a little strange that this newly formed continent should be populated to this degree, we have to assume that the local populace fled here to escape the Shadowlord's wrath. In any case, the Lord of Darkmane Keep is a good guy and deserves your help, if only because his forces are revolting against the Shadowlord's oppression.

The name of this scenario—Bleeding Mountains—is painfully appropriate: there will be a lot of blood shed by both sides here, since the rugged terrain severely limits maneuvering. The battle is tactically challenging because you have to defend Arduir, Baladoth, Matan (settlers of Aer are really bad about naming villages after legendary Elven leaders) and the Tower of the Plague, while simultaneously capturing Iron Pass Tower and Darkmane and Griffon Keeps. The victory hexes are scattered all over the battlefield, which makes the fight tougher than usual to win.

Arduir is the farthest away from the other villages, and from the victory hexes, so a defensive strategy works well here. Put a Mech (an Iron Giant is perfect) along with a decent Missile unit (such as an experienced Longbow or Pistolier), and have a Skirmisher and Cavalry ready to cut up and delay any approaching force.

Mass your main force along the Baladoth-Matan line. Position the Cavalry to take advantage of what few roads there are (Figure 12-1). Meanwhile, have a group of Light Cavalry and Skirmishers ready to screen any attempted counterattack from the Shadowlord's forces. Take out the enemy force at Harview before trying to besiege Iron Pass Tower.

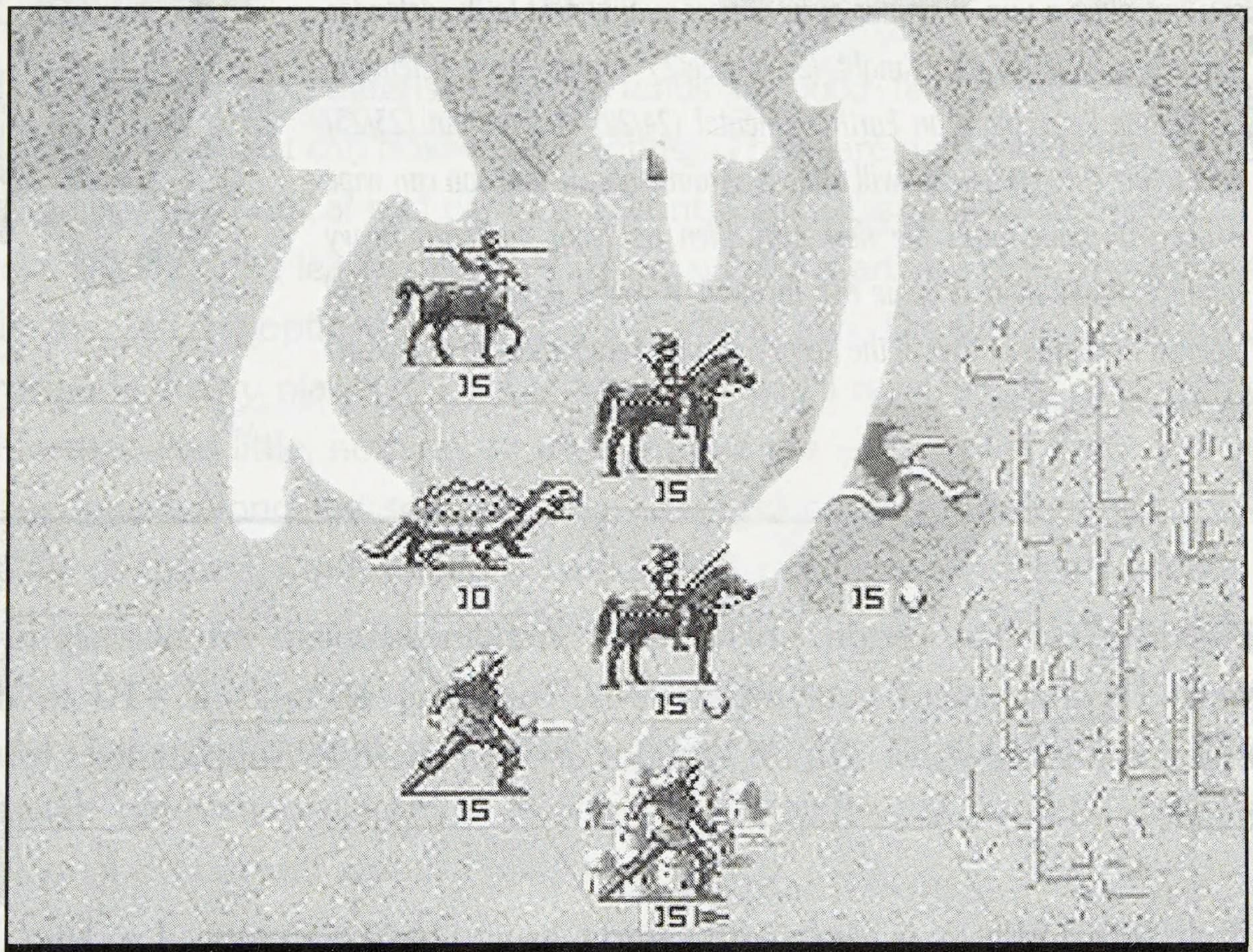
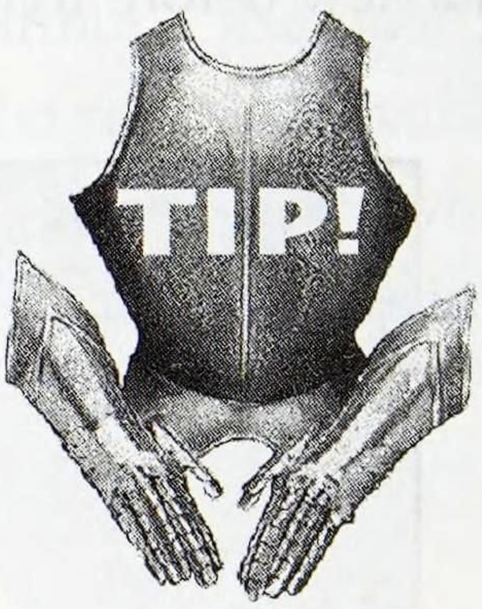


FIGURE 12-1.
Maneuvering is at a minimum in the Bleeding Mountains, so when you get the chance to charge with Cavalry, take it!

Be careful when you start your siege because the defenders here (which vary according to your troops' experience and grade) are generally tough Heavy Infantry. Orc Knights and Shadow Warriors, unlike the Tower/Keep defenders of previous continents, will not hesitate to attack if they see an opening.

You can actually use the aggressive nature of Tower and Keep defenders to your advantage. Instead of covering every unit with a Missile unit's defensive fire, place a unit of similar or just lesser quality next to the defender. For instance, if an Orc Knight (24 Melee/25 Armor) were defending Darkmane Keep, place an Earth Elemental (24/22) or Lionman (23/25) next to the Orc. The enemy will almost certainly attack, and you can wipe it out with your forces the next turn, then rest your damaged Heavy Infantry. While there is some risk involved, if you've done your job and isolated the besieged unit in the Keep, your unit being attacked really isn't in that much danger.



The Stones of St. Sirion, unlike most "standing stones," are actually pretty beneficial. They Bless your entire army, granting all units a +10 to their Morale, and 25 percent of their Wounds are converted to Suppressions for the remainder of the turn.

Pharoah's Sanctum is also worth visiting, as you have a chance of picking up a reasonable amount of gold (60%) or a Basic Magic Item (40%).

When you finish adding rivers of red to the Bleeding Mountains, you get a chance to staunch some of the holes in your army:

1. **Knowing that the Council's budget is already stretched thin (and elections are coming up), the Lord of Darkmane Keep gives you 350 gold.**
2. **A Lieutenant from the lord's personal guard joins your army.**

SOUTHERN DANGERS

After your victory in the Bleeding Mountains, you have two different routes from which to choose. Once again, the southern path is fraught with randomly generated perils. The first scenario along that route, though, is the Sundry Shadow Coast, about as close to a normal fight as you are likely to find on this continent.

The AI is set for defense, and it tends to build fewer—but more high-powered—units that can hold villages longer. There are no benefits for finishing early, so be methodical and capture Ethrint, Darvak, and Querto in turn. The Circle of Vanderbilt leaves you gold automatically (starting your own university with the gift is optional). Shrieker's Cavern and Dreadwood Haven are particularly dreary places, with a chance that you'll receive little or nothing at the former, and little, nothing, or an enemy at the latter—pass these by.

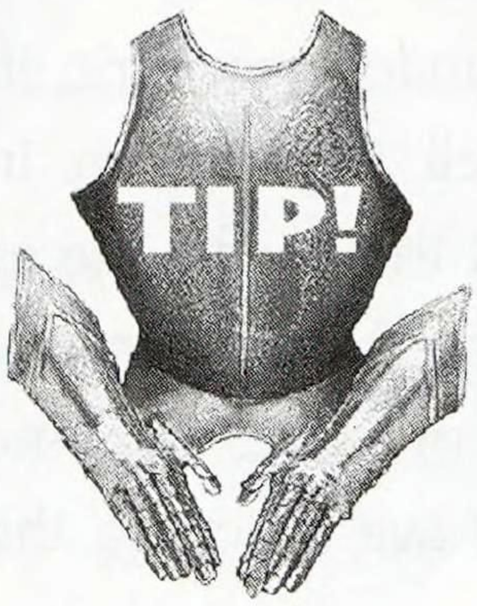
Continuing along the southern route brings you to a random scenario in Deadlands Island, and another battle that might as well be random in Southbender Island, since you must eliminate 90 percent of the enemy forces to win. Even the Shrine of the Sentinel is tainted by an Iron Giant guardian. Tindal Cove Island, the scenario following, is another random battle, this time in tough mountainous terrain. At least here you merely have to cause the traditional 80 percent casualties.

SAIL NORTH, YOUNG CHAMPION

So, you are much better off sending your military expedition northward. In the Labyrinth Valley, you have the spirit of a randomly generated battle, as the Shadowlord's forces attempt to ambush you and cut isolated units off in the rugged terrain. Light Infantry work well here, as do Skirmishers. Keep your cool and don't panic, since to win you only have to capture Corig's Bluff Castle.

Unlike a random scenario, however, the Labyrinth contains some worthwhile treasures:

- *The Eternal Caverns is a typical shrine, with some gold and Basic Magic wares. The Altar of Stacia, though, rewards you with an Auxiliary unit (see below) or an Excellent Magic Item, provided that it isn't empty (20% chance).*
- *Balorr's Cave has a variety of gold to offer (60%) or it rewards you with a Magic Item (40%).*
- *The Shrine of the Mongrels (why would anyone enter with a name like that?) gives gold* and *a Magic Item, but it's guarded by a nasty Mummy—better send in a unit strong enough to survive.*



At the Shrine of the Mongrels, teach the old dog a new trick. Since the Mummy is Undead, have Sir Kalador within range to cast Dispel Undead immediately after the Mummy makes its appearance. With your opposition unwrapped, you can make tracks away from the shrine toward the Castle.

When you emerge triumphant from the Labyrinth Valley, the following occurs:

1. Your war chest is increased by 350 gold, and
2. An Auxiliary unit of Spirit Riders joins you.

CLOVEN HOOF, SHARK'S TOOTH, & OTHER NASTY NORTHERN AFFAIRS

At Sharktooth Island, the next battle, your army is plunged into another random battle, where you must wipe out 85 percent of the enemy to win. If you do perform your duty, you are rewarded (more than usual) with 300 gold.

The next battle is more traditional, with Hunter's Isle being another of those dig-them-out-of-the-trenches, attrition-heavy affairs. You must capture both enemy villages and the Temple of the Beastlord to win. The Shrine of the Cloven Hoof (wouldn't the "all games are instruments of the devil" crowd have a field day with *this* battle?) has a 90 percent chance of an Excellent Magic Item, so be sure to visit—just don't loiter near any pentagrams.

When you win, the following happens:

1. **Another General, whom you have saved from an ignominious death, decides he should repay your generosity by joining your army.**
2. **Your pockets are filled with 250 gold.**
3. **Southbender Island, on the far end of the Archipelago, is liberated; for what's it's worth, you can't go south any longer, O Committed One...**

The pattern continues with Marisil Island and Argraksa Island. The first is a wild Melee on what passes for a plain on this continent; you must cause 85 percent casualties to gain 300 gold. The latter requires you to destroy 80 percent of the enemy, but it has a few unpleasant surprises:

- *The villages have nothing of value—ignore them as much as possible.*
- *The Shrine of Gabathu worships an adder (possibly a relative of Ssazikar) and has a good chance of being empty; otherwise it just holds a scant amount of gold.*

- *The Bleeding Cavern is a curse—for the Shadowlord. If a single unit of yours enters, your entire army will be enchanted by the Open Wounds spell.*
- *The Nightshade Barrow is a typical gold/Basic Magic Item shrine.*

The best thing to do here is to treat this like any random scenario: crush the opposition and move on to the next battle; no side quests.

THE TRANSITION TO FIRE ISLE

The most difficult thing about the Crimson Sands is that it is fought over a large battlefield; but the terrain is so rugged that maneuverability is tight even for this continent. Make sure to upgrade your Siege units before beginning this battle because you must capture Bloodhearth Castle *and* both Trihorn and Manowar Towers to win. Also, you must defend your own Tower, Tarmouth, but this can be held with a medium-grade Heavy Infantry (go for Armor over Melee here).

There are few subtle points to this battle—it's a toe-to-toe slugfest throughout. You can pick up some help along the way, however:

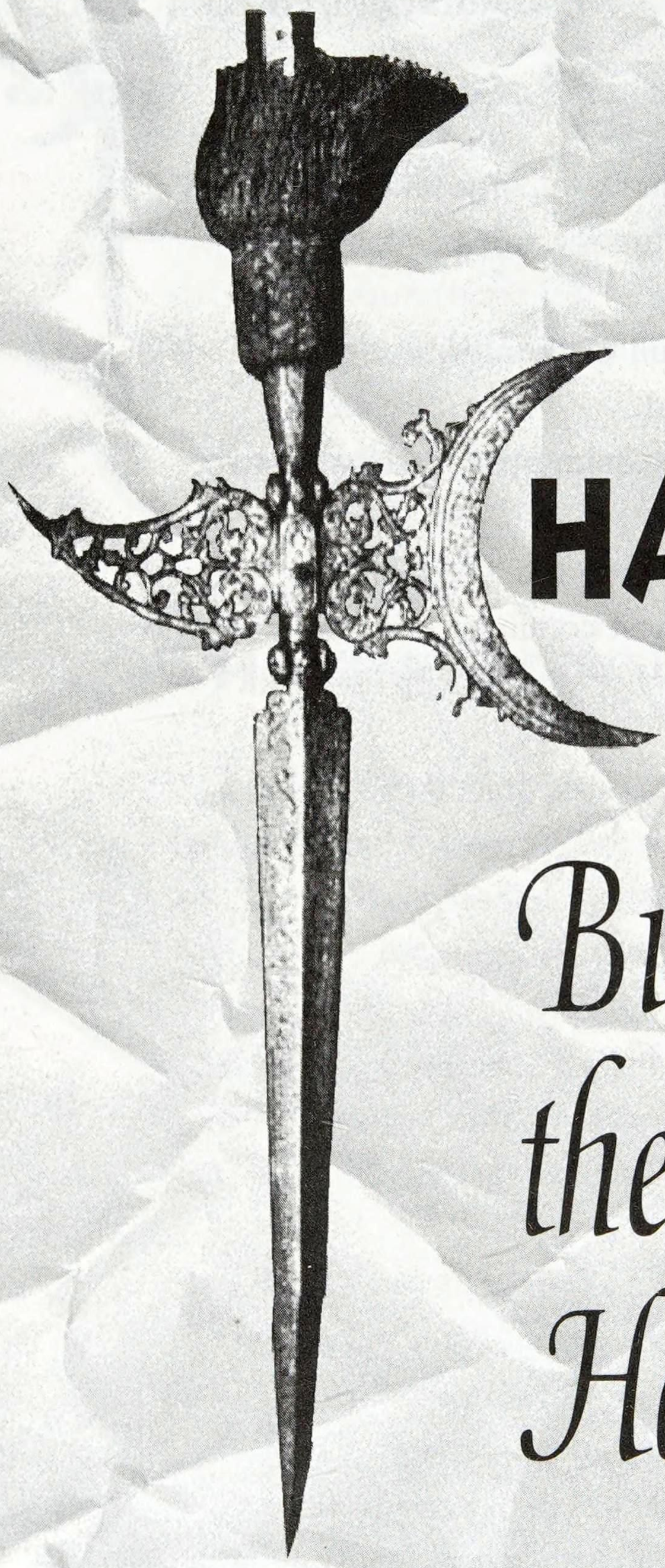
- *The Cave of the Bardix Clan automatically gives you the services of an Auxiliary Berserker unit.*
- *The Obelisk to Kietarn is like that weird object in* 2001: A Space Odyssey, *since you don't know quite what it'll do. If you reach it (doubtful, but worth a try) by turn nine, it will either cast Fatigue on both armies (40% chance), Healing on both armies (40%), or Berserk on just your army (20%).*

If you can't reach the Obelisk by turn nine, forget it. On turn ten and after, your entry triggers a Raise the Dead spell that benefits only *the Shadowlord's army.*

When you finally emerge victorious from this battle, you are rewarded as follows:

1. **You get a full Champion's portion of 500 gold.**
2. **Your army maximum increases by two.**

Now we head to the final, and in many ways, the toughest continent, the very center of the Shadowlord's power: Fire Isle itself.



CHAPTER 13

Burning Down the Shadowlord's House

Fire Isle Returns Angrily to the Sea

If you've reached this point in the game, you have my congratulations for a well-fought campaign. After the Dragonscale Archipelago has finally fallen, your first impulse is to trust your adrenaline levels and charge. Instead, I suggest you take a deep breath and look at the experience levels—and grades of quality—of your army.

THE CRIMSON SANDS

More blood imagery, but it's honest. However, in the Crimson Sands you at least have a base from which to start, giving you more control over your campaign. As you prepare for the assault on the Shadowlord's power base, upgrade everything you can. There is no longer a Specialization factor to worry about, and you are going to need the best troops money can buy. Certainly the Shadowlord holds nothing back on Fire Isle—basically, every unit you face is grade-5; for a look at your competition, check out Table 13-1. But don't despair, there are ways to defeat these formidable foes.

In the table, note that the Shadowlord's elite troops are shown in *italics*, while the crack Council units are listed in normal script for comparison.

Table 13-1: Comparisons of Grade-5 Units

Unit	Combat	Armor	Movement	Ability	Spell	Weakness	Edge
Heavy Infantry							
Shadow Warriors	*30*	*28*	*3*	*Heroic*	*Force March*	*None*	*Even*
Elephantmen	30	28	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	Even
Heavy Spearmen	27	31	3	Pike	Force March	None	Even
Sky Hunters							
Shadow Dragons	*22*	*22*	*7*	*Heroic*	*N/A*	*None*	*Slight Disadvantage*
Phoenix Hawks	22	21	7	Mech-Invulnerable	Raise Dead	None	Slight Advantage
Bombardier							
Zeppelin	*26*	*20*	*5*	*Heroic*	*N/A*	*None*	*Even*
Cloud Ship (both)	28	19	5	N/A	N/A	Magic	Even
Pegasus Riders	25	18	5	N/A	N/A	None	Even
Siege							
Black Ice Throwers	*23*	*20*	*3*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*None*	*Moderate Disadvantage*
Wall Blasters (both)	28	14	3	N/A	N/A	Magic	Moderate Advantage
Pit Cannon	25	12	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	Moderate Advantage
Light Cavalry							
Flamer	*19*	*22*	*6*	*N/A*	*Eagle Eye*	*None*	*Slight Disadvantage*
Knight Gunners	20	21	6	N/A	Eagle Eye	None	Slight Advantage
Light Infantry							
Mummy	*26*	*20*	*4*	*Undead*	*N/A*	*None*	*Even*
Berserkers	24	22	4	Berserk	N/A	None	Even
Cavalry							
Shadow Knights	*26*	*25*	*5*	*Mystic/Battle Lust*	*Raise Dead*	*None*	*Moderate Advantage*
Centaur Knights	25	30	5	N/A	Raise Dead	None	Moderate Disadvantage
Thunder Tread (both)	22	32	5	N/A	N/A	Magic	Moderate Disadvantage
Archer							
Steam Gunners	*21*	*18*	*3*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*None*	*Slight Advantage*
Royal Archers	20	17	3	N/A	N/A	None	Slight Disadvantage

Note that there is basically a standoff when it comes to Light Infantry. Not only are Mummies and Berserkers equally matched, as seen in the table, but both sides have access to the marvelous Trail Runners—neither army gets the advantage.

In other categories, Humans enjoy blowing things up, so it comes as little surprise that as the use of gunpowder increases, Mortal units hold their own and even surpass Magic units. The Knight Gunners and Siege units are your biggest advantages over the Shadowlord's forces, so it makes sense to exploit those by building more of these unit classes whenever your Army Maximum increases—as it does just before you begin the fight to free Fire Isle.

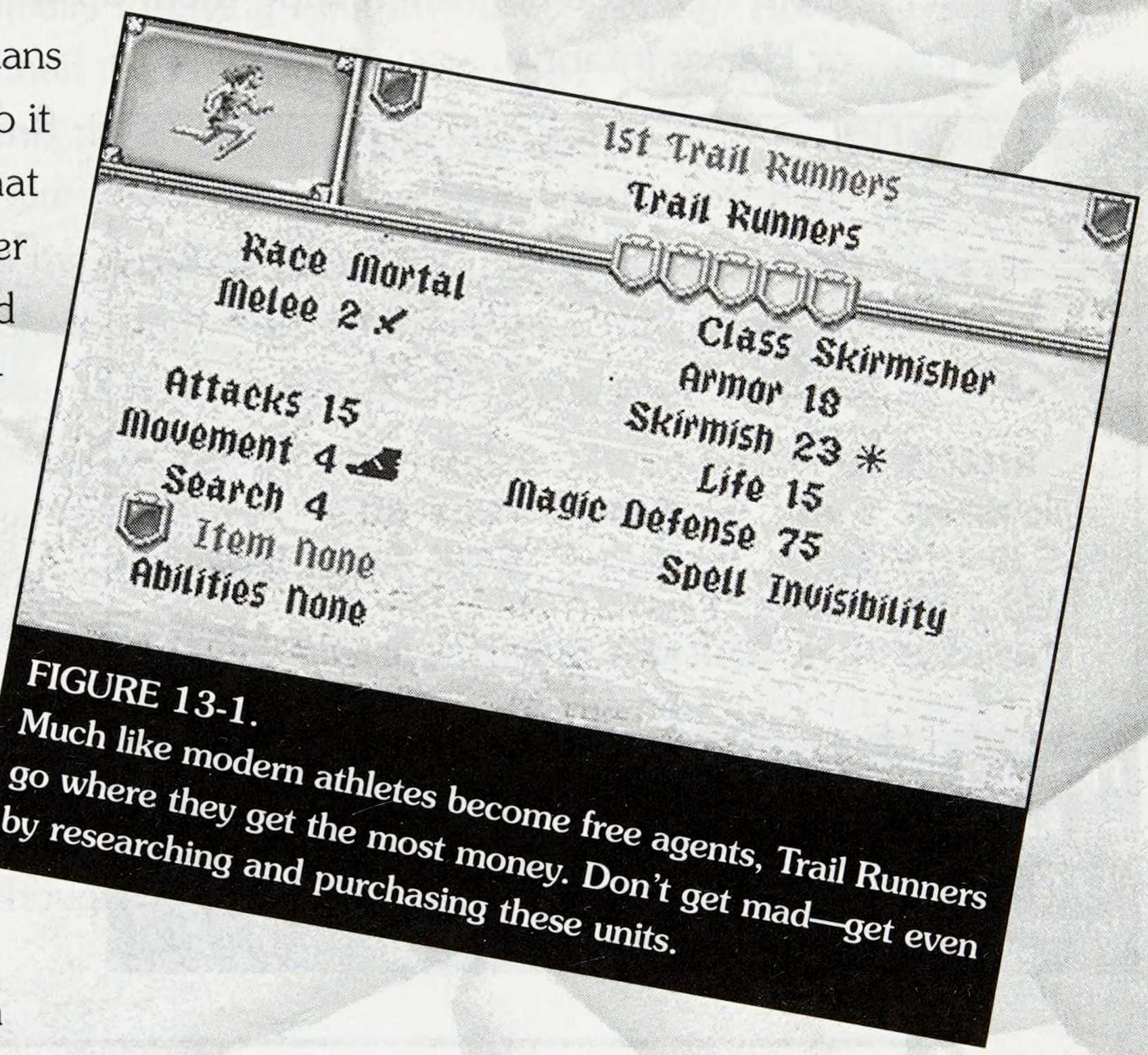


FIGURE 13-1.
Much like modern athletes become free agents, Trail Runners go where they get the most money. Don't get mad—get even by researching and purchasing these units.

Concurrently, you should seek to neutralize the Shadowlord's advantages:

1. **Keep Sir Kalador healthy. His main purpose on Fire Isle is to eliminate all Undead units in an area.**
2. **Win Air superiority as soon as possible. Malric or Valira makes this easier, but Phoenix Hawks are excellent units as well. Escorting Kalador is a good idea, especially if you don't have control of the skies as yet.**

3. The Shadow Knights are a problem, since your own Cavalry will take losses in one-on-one combat with them, and these Shadows aren't vulnerable to Mechs. Charm these units with Shandel, or Skirmish them to distraction, then wipe them up with your own Cavalry or Heavy Infantry.

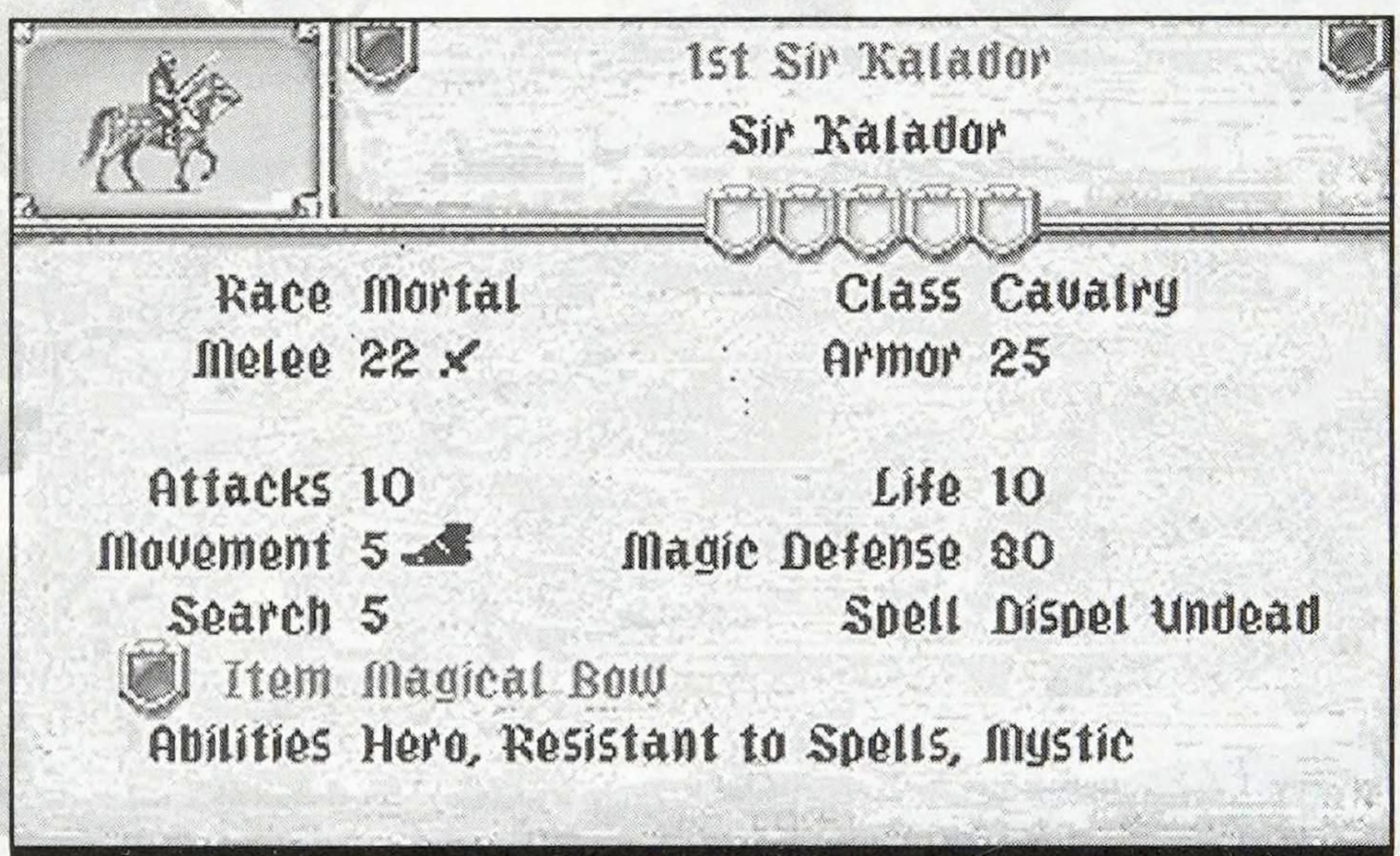
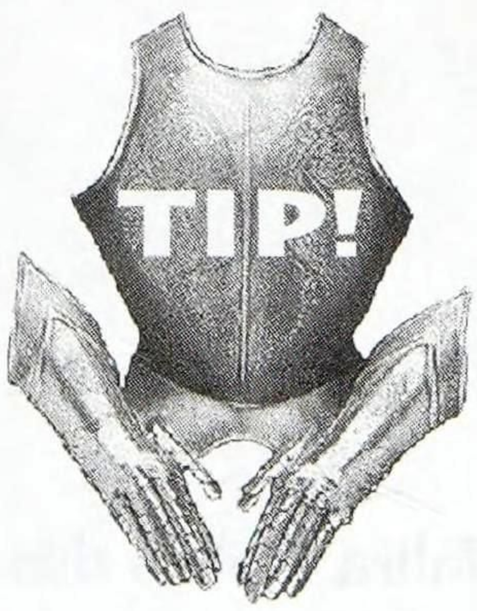


FIGURE 13-2.
Sir Kalador needs a swimming buddy, or more accurately, a flying pal, to get him (and his Dispel Undead spell) safely through the final continent.

4. The slight difference in quality between the enemy's Archers and yours isn't that much to worry about. When you attack enemy Archers in Melee, use Mech units, as their higher Armor strengths will usually get them through relatively unscathed.



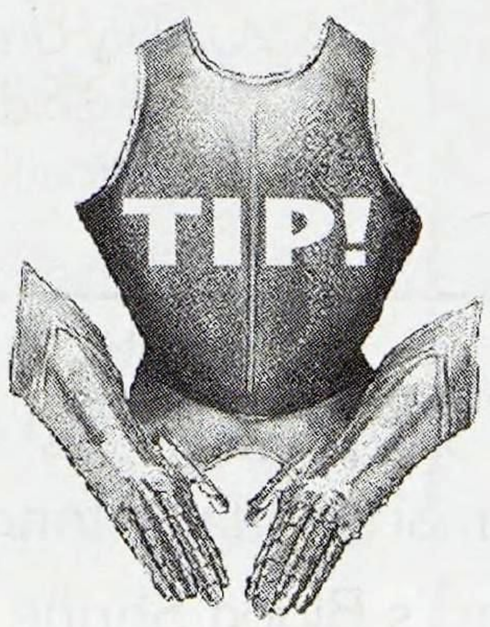
Since Archers always fire before either Skirmishers or any Melee-oriented units, they will be effective for defensive fire even if they aren't grade-5. Sure, it's nice if every unit in your army is grade-5 with experience levels off the scale, but that isn't going to happen often if you're playing with the AI set to Hard. You can skimp a little on Archers for the first few scenarios, so long as they are at least grade-3, and you'll still be able to cover your front line units with a protective umbrella of missile fire. This leaves you with that much more money to spend on Phoenix Knights and Wall Blasters.

BURNING HEIGHTS & GLOWING SANDS

Fire Isle is like an indescribably hot date: an incredible tease one moment, dangerous the next, and finally forgiving—but invariably exciting. Nowhere is this flavor captured better than the first two scenarios. Both offer such a varied mix of traps and enticements that it's tough to choose a path.

If you go south to the Burning Heights, you have another of those *faux* random battles where you must cause 80 percent enemy losses to win. For once, this isn't an ambush scenario: the Shadowlord's troops are actually withdrawing behind a screen of Auxiliaries and Light Cavalry, mostly Flamers and Trail Runners, with the latter quite adept at getting around in the rough terrain due to its Pathmaster ability.

If you scout properly, you'll notice that the AI isn't quite as conservative as a lot of human generals. When it withdraws, the Shadow troops take a few chances so that they can move more quickly. What you have to do is engage the Skirmish troops and hammer them before the Shadowlord's Heavy Infantry can move down from the north of the battlefield. The AI likes to make a stand in the middle of the map, though it's not that concerned about specific villages.



Since you don't have to capture any Keeps or Towers to win the Burning Heights scenario, it's a good place to practice a new Siege technique. Buy an Earthmaster (or better still, upgrade an experienced Spellcaster to an Earthmaster) and cast Earthquake on the defending Tower. Then move Siege units next to the damaged Tower and enemy unit, and fire away. After this pummeling, often only one Heavy Infantry and Skirmisher are needed to finish the job.

The fates are kind, as you find at the Wailing Rock Altar (wailing—or whining—*is* allowed if you don't get what you want):

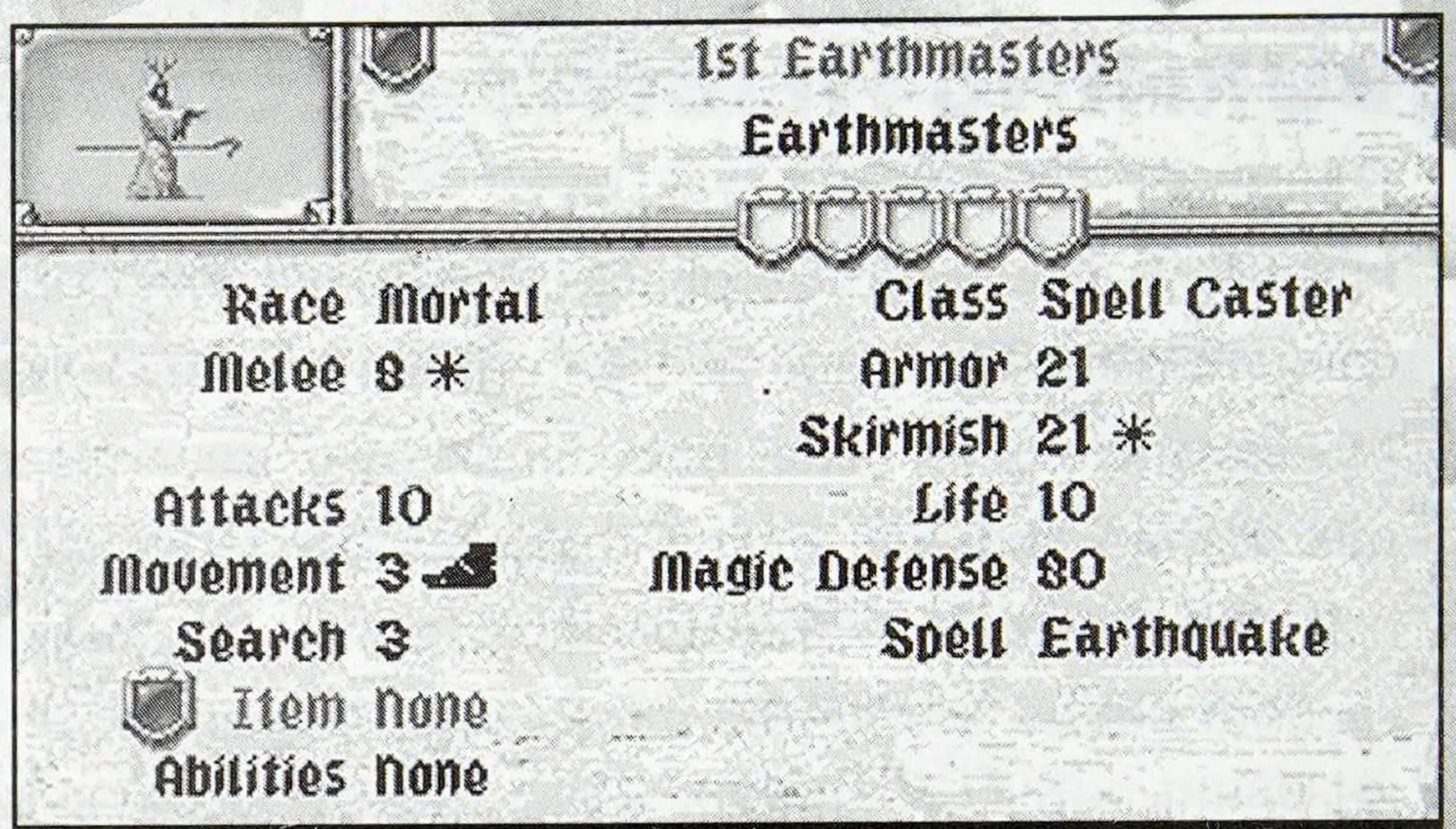


FIGURE 13-3.
Earthmasters are a great way to shake up Tower defenses on Fire Isle.

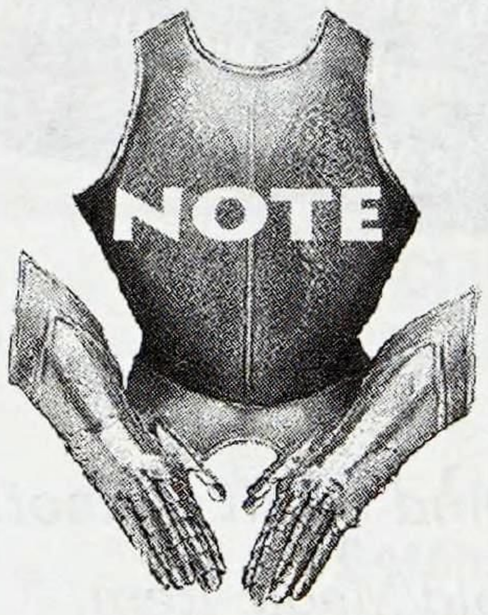
Table 13-2: Wailing Rock Altar Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
For Warlord Marcas:		
Auxiliary Unit	Knight Gunner	30%
More Gold	See Table 9-6	20%
Hero	See Table 11-7	50%
For Calis, Krell, and Mordra:		
Auxiliary Unit	Knight Gunner	45%
More Gold	See Table 9-6	20%
Hero	See Table 11-7	35%

If you want to run around the Ruedemal Circle, keep in mind that they are normal standing stones and may give you a Magic Item or nothing at all. At the Heart's Blood Shrine (and whose blood do you think the name is referring to? Danger, Danger!) the following occurs:

1. A crystalline substance forms around your Armor, increasing its value by two.
2. Because of the instant increase of weight and the fact the ground is shaking, your unit suffers from nausea and the Fatigue spell.
3. You hear chants of "California, San Andreas, North Beach..." as a Magical substance called "smog" fills the air.
4. The assembled Earthmasters (one unit), upset that you have disrupted their chance to see San Francisco Bay, angrily attack you.

When you meet your victory conditions, you get 300 gold and an Auxiliary Samurai unit.



The islands of Fire Isle and the Archipelago are one of the few places where the background differs from the classic European fantasy mold (the other major difference is the Mech units). The Samurai are modeled historically enough, given the compromises made for playability. It would have been nice if the designers had given these brave warriors a higher Morale and/or Magic Resistance to closer model their mythic qualities.

Actually, the Samurai you pick up on Fire Isle are fairly close to the popular view of ronin, those roving masterless warriors right out of a Kurasawa film. More than you can say about the ashigaru, *which is probably why the name is mangled here as Ashiguers to protect the innocent. The real ashigaru were fairly ineffective light infantry, so it's just as well SSI kept it fun rather than historical. If you are interested in this sort of thing, there's a Milton Bradley board game,* Shogun, *which gives no more insight but is fairly fun in its own right.*

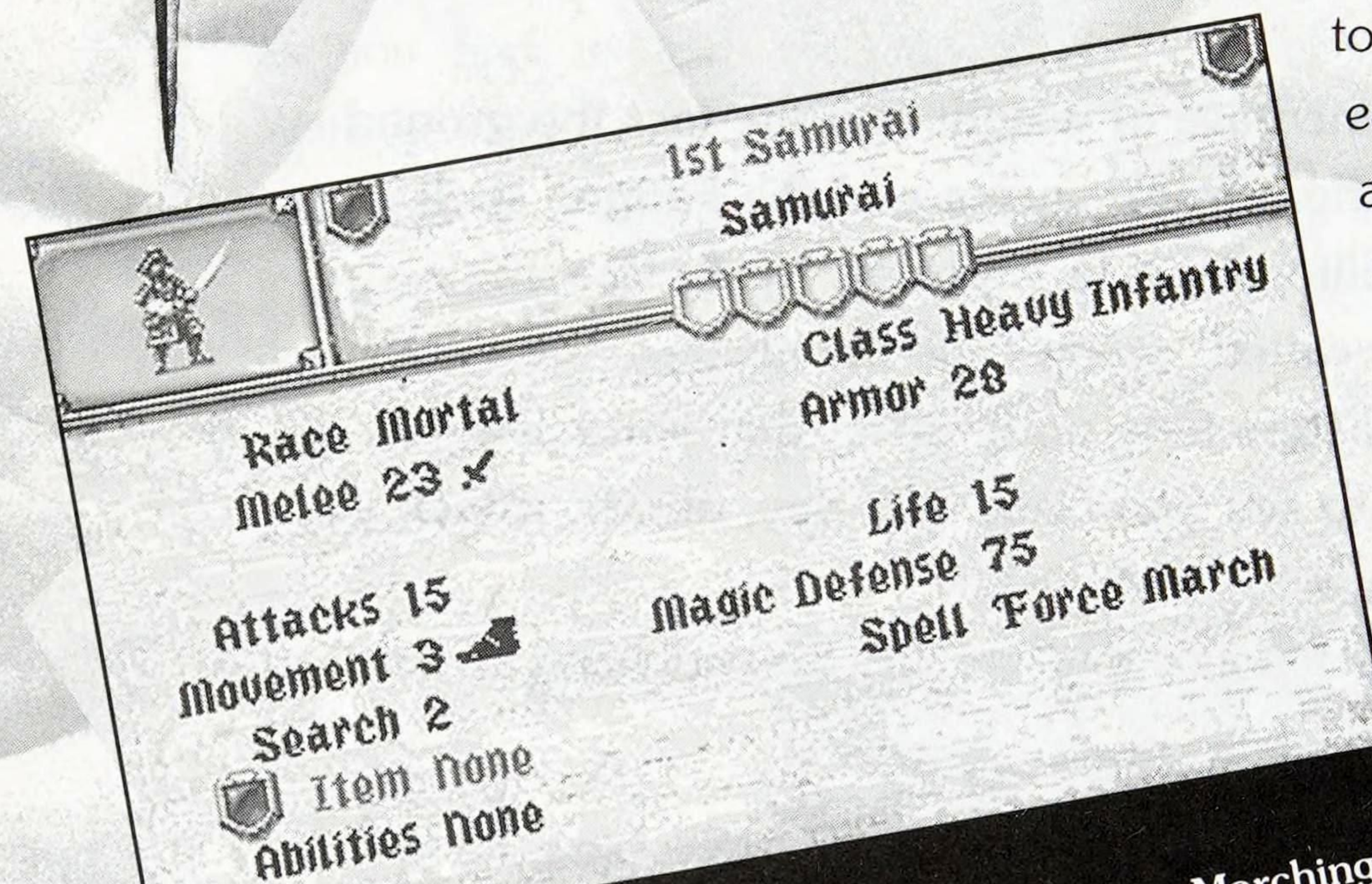


FIGURE 13-4.
Samurai, with their Open movement and Force Marching, are tough enough to be effective on Fire Isle, even though they're only grade-4 units.

If Burning Heights seems too random, or you don't like earthquakes, you can pick up an Ashiguer (see sidebar) and still receive the same 300 gold by choosing the other scenario, Glowing Sands. All you have to do is capture four Towers. If you enjoy sieges and have the firepower to pull them off, this is certainly easier mentally—very cut-and-dried. Your rewards are much the same as well:

- *Hellwind Shaft is another typical Shrine, 40/60 percent chance for gold/Magic Item.*
- *Firethorn Altar is exactly the same as the Wailing Rock Altar, with a Lion Dragon substituted for the Knight Gunners.*
- *Peril's Ring attacks you with a Shadow Warrior, but you have an equal chance of defending yourself with a shiny new Magic Axe, Bow, Crossbow, Javelin, or Sword.*

BAD ENEMIES, ATTACKING PUNS

You have to give the writers credit; they did a very good job of balancing epic seriousness with fun throughout the campaign. The next group of four scenarios, however, score higher than usual in the pun quotient.

You must fight one of the following scenarios: Searwood Forest, Duskhill Fells, Ashfall Forest, or Pinion Plains, to move on in the campaign. Searwood Forest has no Robin Hood, but it does have a mostly Mech army that tends to get bogged down in the thick woods, luckily for you. Be careful if the random map lays down a good road network. Kill 80 percent of the enemy to move onward and receive 250 gold.

Duskill Fells is fought over predominantly rugged terrain against a force that looks as though it came from the Shadowlord's rejects—I've even seen some grade-3 units at times. This is probably the easiest of this set of "random factors" to win; you get 250 gold after 80 percent of your enemies fall.

Quite the contrary, Ashfall Forest is pretty challenging. You face a much smaller force that is generally a good mix of Mech and Evil Mortal troops. Because the group is small, the AI does a better job of maneuvering here. Having

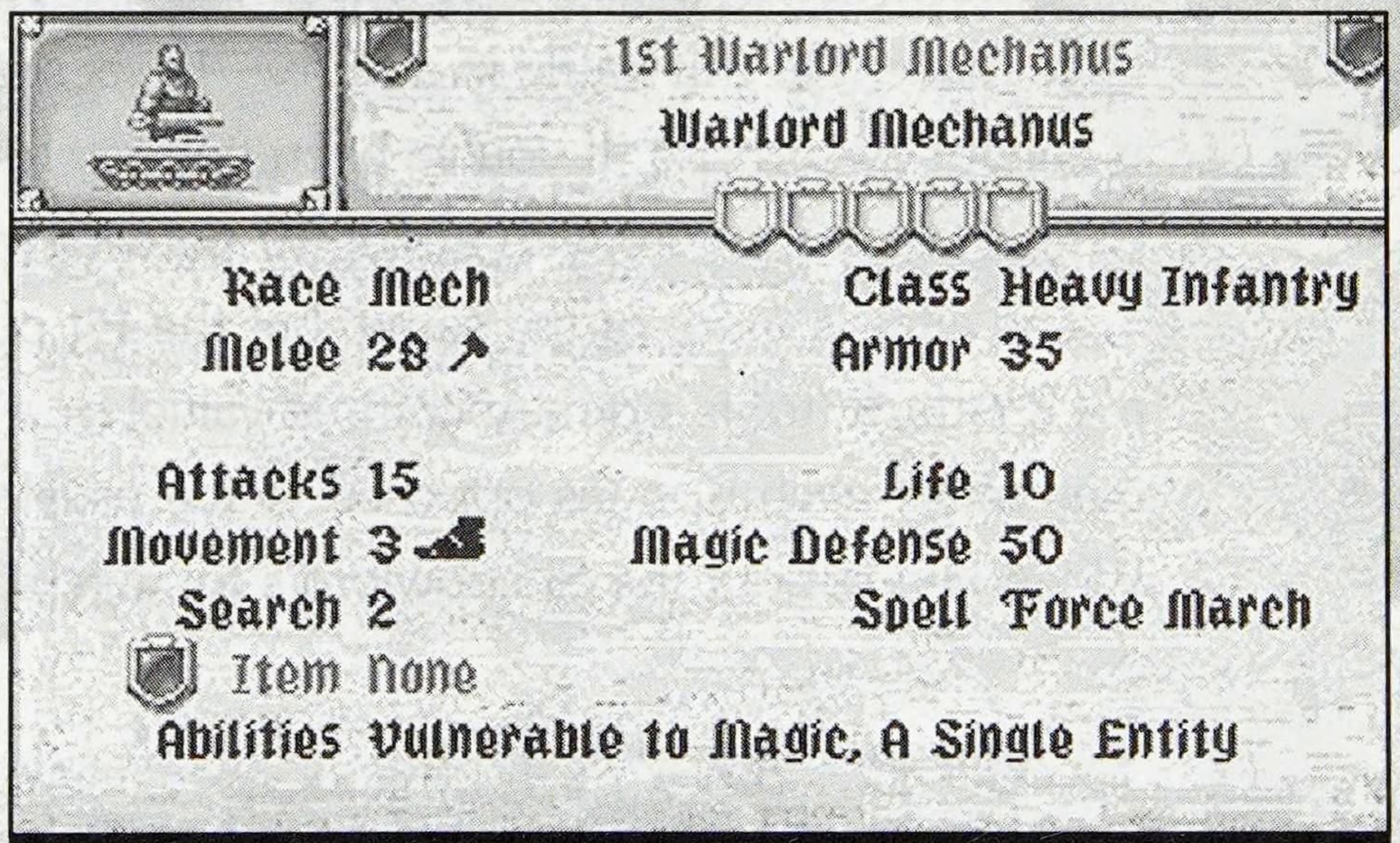


FIGURE 13-5.
This Warlord Mechanus may be a tough unit in the open spaces of the Pinion Plains, but its maneuverability is wasted in the thick woods of Searwood Forest.

to take out 85 percent of the Shadowlord's best doesn't make it any easier to get the 250 gold.

The Pinion Plains is fun because it takes place in a mostly clear spot, but their Mechs can do a lot of damage to you, too. For only 200 gold, I'd pass on this chaos.

TAKE SOME ASPIRIN

The Cracked Spine Mountains look tempting (by the way, this is as close as the Shadowlord ever gets to humor, so enjoy it now, if you can), but there's nothing there you need. If you feel compelled to fight here, visit the Pitiless Stones for the gold and pass on the Shadow Dragon at the Silver Tine Altar.

A much better choice is to check out the Valley of Flaming Tongues. If you have made it to this battle in a hurry—in six scenarios or less—the Shadowlord is caught by surprise. If you've been fighting too many battles, though, the Evil One is ready for you, with about 40 percent more troops and income.

The altar is more of the same, but the Pit of Remorse gives your unit either a +2 Attack (to its primary combat value) or a +2 to the number of Attacks it may make each turn (as opposed to the usual 15, or one attack for each life). When you cut out the Shadowlord's tongue, so to speak, you are:

- *Showered with 350 gold;*
- *Allowed to taste the Fire Isle Select Salsa; and*
- *Given a brand-new Wall Blaster (the Shadowlord's Greatest Hits tape not included).*

OUT OF THE FLAME, INTO THE FIRE

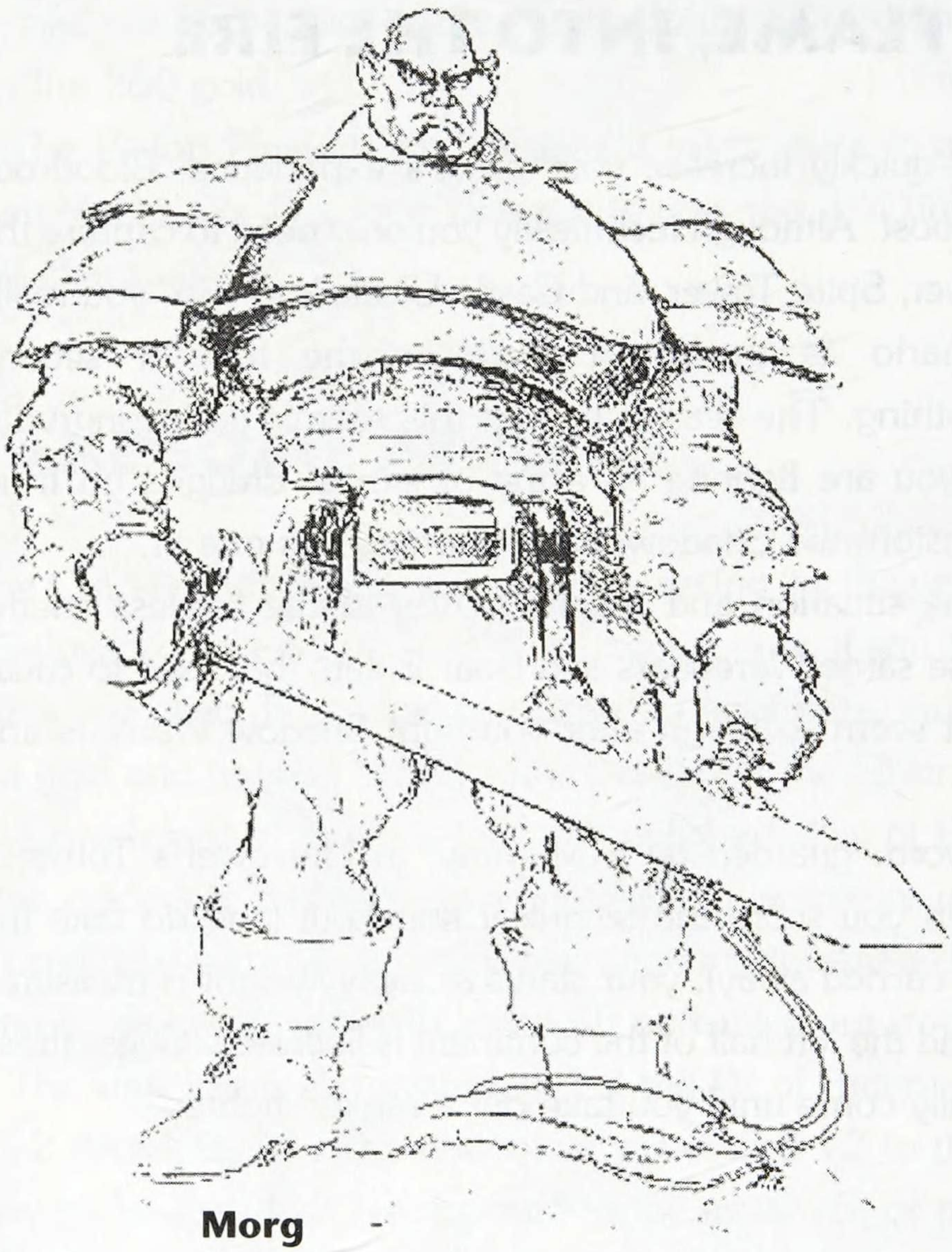
If you need a battle to quickly increase your army's experience, Bloodrock Furnace is a great ego boost. Although technically you only need to capture the World's End Watch Tower, Spite Tower, and Castle Ulvelaik to win, you really should treat this scenario as though it were on the first or second continent–capture everything. The reason behind this seemingly incongruous line of thought is that you are fighting an army of extras, dredged up from some second-rate dimension; the Shadowlord is phoning this one in.

Take advantage of the situation and pummel away at the hapless enemy troops. Notice how these same Werebears and Boar Riders that used to cause you so much grief don't seem so tough after you fight Shadow Warriors and Flamers.

There is a Magic Sword, guarded by a Mummy, in Harrower's Tomb, if you're so inclined. When you score the technical knockout (and *do* take the surrender, don't get too carried away), your status as heavyweight is measured by a sum of 350 gold, and the left half of the continent is liberated. Guess those endorsements won't really come until you take out a ranked fighter...

SKULLS

If you are itching to take on a quality opponent, Morg the Lasher waits in Desolation Gorge—but you must select this *instead* of Bloodrock Furnace or the region will be liberated before you can reach it.



Morg

Villain Showcase

Someone has to wear the Big Black Hat, or Marshal Calis and the posse have nowhere to go. Morg the Lasher is so slimy that you are tempted to add "enjoys being evil" under his skill listing:

Melee	Armor	MR	Class	Spell	Ability
32	30	80	Heavy Infantry	Magic Armor	Battle Lust

Morg is ferocious in hand-to-hand combat; due to his Magic Armor, he enjoys the Melee modifier of Battle Lust without suffering much from the negative aspects. Hero-to-Villain combat is fun, but don't get all macho and lose–say, Sir Kalador, in a silly bout for honor. The Shadowlord can afford character losses more than you can.

Morg tends to fight defensively until you show a weakness, then he throws his Shadow Cavalry at your battered units. Trying to bait him with a feint is difficult; you're better off just playing solidly and pushing him back toward the twin towers of Doomwatch and the Torturer.

As for points of interest, the Ring of Darkness and Vulture's Feast are good to check for gold/Magic Items, but Deathspawn Altar (another one of those "Hmm, wonder what's in here" names) either gives you a wonderful Trail Runner Auxiliary or a bag of gold along with a welcoming committee of Lava Warrior Light Infantry.

Once Morg and his troops are dis-Gorged, you clean up:

1. **The 350 gold you receive should buy another couple of upgrades;**
2. **Almost half the continent is now liberated; and**
3. **You get the Skull of Crang. This allows you to curse a unit within three hexes, causing it to lose half its remaining life as Wounds—a marvelously nasty item that you, as a self-righteous Champion, may use with good conscience.**

HAVE SKULL, WILL TRAVEL

Having the Skull is a wonderful thing, but it does change the way your enemies view you. (If you came from Bloodrock Furnace and don't have the Skull yet, don't worry, you can get it later.) For example, the Goat King—one of the Shadowlord's better field marshals—understands how tough the Skull is. If you possess it, the old goat will get more troops and income from the Shadowlord to compensate.

Because of this, Stoneflow Valley and Falcon's Beak Peninsula are tougher than the typical random scenarios. To win, you must cause 85 percent enemy

casualties in the former and 90 percent in the latter. The Goat King's force is primarily composed of grade-5 Beast units, and they are tough, to put it mildly. But you'd better buckle down and go for it because if you win, you eliminate the Shadowlord's Dwarven advantage—very important when you fight the climactic final battle in Shadowlord Vale. You also pick up a few trinkets for putting your army through this matched set of scenarios:

1. **At Stoneflow, the King's Mine is a typical gold/Magic Item split.**
2. **Also at Stoneflow is the Fire Ruby, found at the Shrine that bears its name.**
3. **Falcon's Beak nearly always has one generic Shrine (like King's Mine above).**
4. **You get 250 gold for winning each scenario.**
5. **Falcon's Beak grants you the Dwarven advantage.**

So what your decision should be based on is whether the Dwarven advantage is worth putting your army through one purely random battle (Falcon's Beak) and another that might as well be (Stoneflow Valley).

Regardless, I recommend that you pass on the Slag River Valley—there is simply not enough there of interest, unless you are desperate for Magic Items. Likewise, Cinder Flats offers little beyond a good scrap against a mainly Mech army on a randomly generated battlefield.

PAINFUL, BUT REWARDING

One battle you simply can't pass up is Painscape Cauldron. If you don't already have the Skull of Crang, you get it by winning here (a nice touch from the designers). If you do possess the Skull already, you are rewarded for your hard

campaigning with an easier scenario: you set up in the southwest, where you can deploy your forces and conduct a fairly normal battle. Also, the Goat King has a less-than-grade-5 army at his disposal (even the best enemies get caught with their horns down occasionally).

Both Tusker Barrow and the Shrine of Retribution are okay to visit because there is only a minimal chance (10%) that they will be empty. Even if you pass them by, however, you *must* capture Temple of the Winnower, as it will award you one of the following:

- *The Ring of Free Movement, if you don't already possess it, or*
- *The Amulet of Blessings, or*
- *The Amulet of Protection.*

The chances that you have all of these are pretty slim.

To emerge victorious, you must capture three Towers—and even if you have the easier battle here, you still must root out some grade-5 troops, mostly Heavy Infantry. Take your time, there are no bonuses for winning early in this scenario. When you finally win, you get 350 gold, and you also liberate the following regions: Bloodrock Furnace, Stoneflow Valley, Falcon's Beak, Slag River Valley, Cinder Flats, and the Accursed Woods (another of those random scenarios).

GOLD & IRON

From here, you should jump to another random scenario, the Pumice Wastes (yes, I know it's unlike me to be recommending a random battle, but bear with me). Here, you will have an advantage over the Mech troops of the enemy, since they won't be able to maneuver very well in the rugged terrain. Once you

win, take your 200 gold and move on to the Seething Moors, where you attempt to capture the Shadowlord's iron shipments—even great Magical beings need raw materials to fashion weapons.

You are spread pretty thin at the start of the Moors scenario, but so is the enemy. Move fast and consolidate your forces along the way; if you take the time to carefully organize your force and then strike, you might run out of time. Since you are fighting time and rugged terrain, pass on most of the Shrines and so on, unless they are right in your path. One important exception is the Cutrock Delve, which gives you either a +2 Armor bonus or the Pathmaster skill, a huge boon to zipping through the difficult terrain. When you win, the world is forever changed:

- *You capture 350 gold from the Shadowlord's war chest.*
- *You liberate Widowthorn Thicket and the Scalding Quagmire.*
- *You receive Auxiliary units in later battles because you have captured the iron shipment.*

Since you've snatched the Shadowlord's metal from his grasp, you might as well steal his gold reserves as well, which you can do by winning Stonewrath Flats. This is a brisk chase scenario, where Marshal Calis and his posse can just gallop down the road. You must make haste in capturing Bonelocca Keep, Tower of Seven, and the four enemy-held villages to reap these bountiful rewards:

1. **If you win by turn fourteen, you get 500 gold instead of the 250 you receive for winning on turn fifteen or later.**
2. **If you win by turn nineteen, you capture the Shadowlord's gold shipment, which limits the AI's income at the end of the campaign.**

A BEASTLY SITUATION

Another path to consider is capturing the Widowthorn Thicket, where you will intercept (and remove from the rest of the game) the Beast mobile reserve of the Shadowlord—sort of like General Schwarzkopf targeting the Republican Guard during Desert Storm. If you choose to capture the iron shipment, you can't fight this battle, so it's either take out the "tanks" of the enemy or remove his ability to craft weapons with iron. This does not prevent you from capturing the enemy gold shipment at Stonewrath Flats. This scenario also awards you with 350 gold and has the usual assortment of Shrines, except for Temple of the Thorn (do I even have to tell you it's a prickly situation?), which gives Oodles of Gold and a potential pummeling by the Shadow Warrior and Elephantmen guarding it.

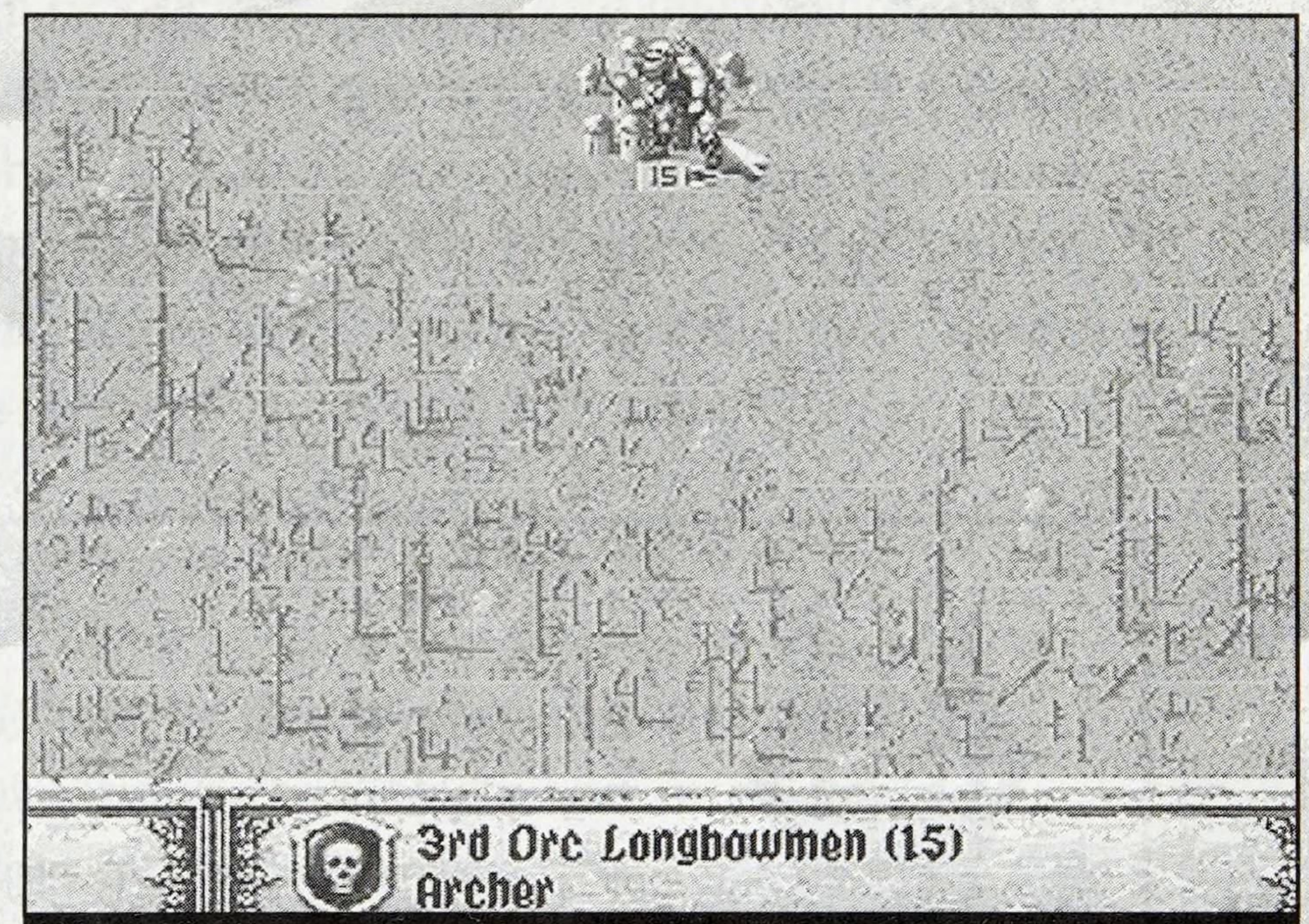


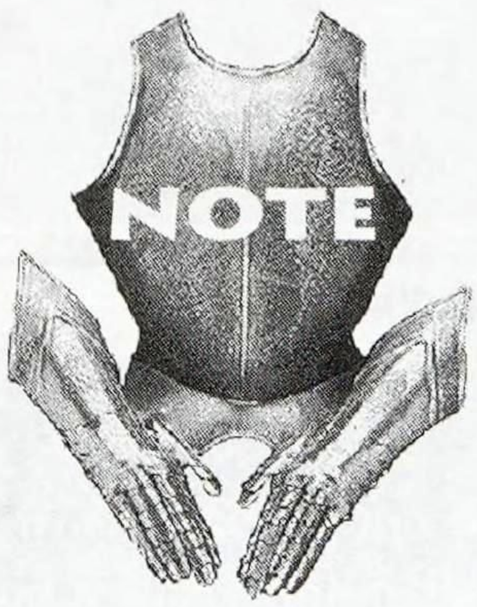
FIGURE 13-6.
Regardless of whether you take out the Beasts or the iron reserves of the Shadowlord, he compensates by putting lesser-grade units in isolated towns, as here, in order to afford better units for the main Shadow army.

KNOCKING ON THE SHADOW DOOR

Now, you must fight through either Fehrdusk Forest or the Roiling Wastes, causing 80 percent enemy casualties in either battle to win. If you've chosen

the Bestial path, when you win, you receive Auxiliary Elephantmen and Ogre Griffons (one each); the Iron path gives you Wall Blasters and a Steam Castle for more Mech-oriented fun. Plus, your Army Maximum increases by two in either case.

Winning either of these battles sets you up to tackle Daemonforge Gap. This is an unsubtle set-piece assault, where you must pry the enemy forces out of a series of fortresses: there are three Towers, a Keep, and a Castle in all. Technically, you only have to capture one of the three towers, along with Numaire Keep and Daemonforge Castle, to win. Realistically, you have to capture two of the three Towers, so that you can mount a two-pronged attack on the Castle and then the Keep. It's nearly impossible to capture all the Towers when playing Hard level (unless you are playing the Warlord), and there's no real benefit to a "capture everything" strategy.



If you haven't captured the Shadowlord's gold train, you are in for a much tougher fight, as the AI gets another 250 gold with which to build units. If you didn't intercept the Beasts on rampage, you'll face a more Bestial force. Likewise, if you failed to capture the iron shipment, the Shadowlord has had plenty of time and ore to roll out the Mechs.

At the start of the scenario, the Shadowlord's forces fight defensively, covering their units with Missile units and staying in terrain with good modifiers (which isn't that tough to do on this continent). As you close in on Daemonforge Castle, however, the AI gets more aggressive, even desperate, in an attempt to take out your units before the climactic final scenario coming up. Specifically, the computer creates "task forces" around each tower, defending

them like aircraft carriers at sea: the interior position is held by a Siege unit, of all things; next to them will be Heavy Infantry, generally either Shadow Warriors or Elephantmen (depending on whether you took out the Strategic Beast Reserve); there is usually a top-notch Cavalry unit (Shadow Knights or Nightmare) held in reserve to destroy units damaged by the Siege fire.

The best way to combat this is as follows:

- *Attack the Siege unit with Sky Hunters and reduce its strength.*
- *If the enemy Cavalry is adjacent to its Siege unit, Bombardiers can reduce the Siege unit while a Sky Hunter attacks the Cavalry and simultaneously escorts the Bomber.*
- *Then move your own Siege units up into range and shell the enemy from a three-hex range.*
- *Follow with high-grade Skirmishers; they have a good chance of getting a Disruption on at least one of the defending units.*
- *Finally, pounce with your Heavy Infantry and Cavalry units.*
- *Remember the Laws of Retreat, and force the enemies back in directions where they will be adjacent to your air or ground units, preventing them from resting properly.*

Of course, this isn't a cut-and-dried thing, as the AI will attempt to prevent your tactics through timely counterattacks and by building new units near the threatened Towers. Still, if you've made it this far, your combat technique should be sufficiently developed to counter any moves by the computer.

You should have time to visit at least one of the several points of interest delineated in Tables 13-3 through 13-5, but don't forget how close you are to ultimate victory. Don't get sidetracked.

Table 13-3: Heartsfire Shrine Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
More Gold	See Table 9-6	50%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	40%
Shrine is Empty	*Nothing*	10%

Table 13-4: Altar of the Blasted Oak Rewards

Reward	Type/Amount	Chance to Receive
More Gold	See Table 9-6	40%
Magic Item	See Table 9-7	40%
Better Magic Item	See Table 9-8	20%

Table 13-5: Crucible of Souls Rewards

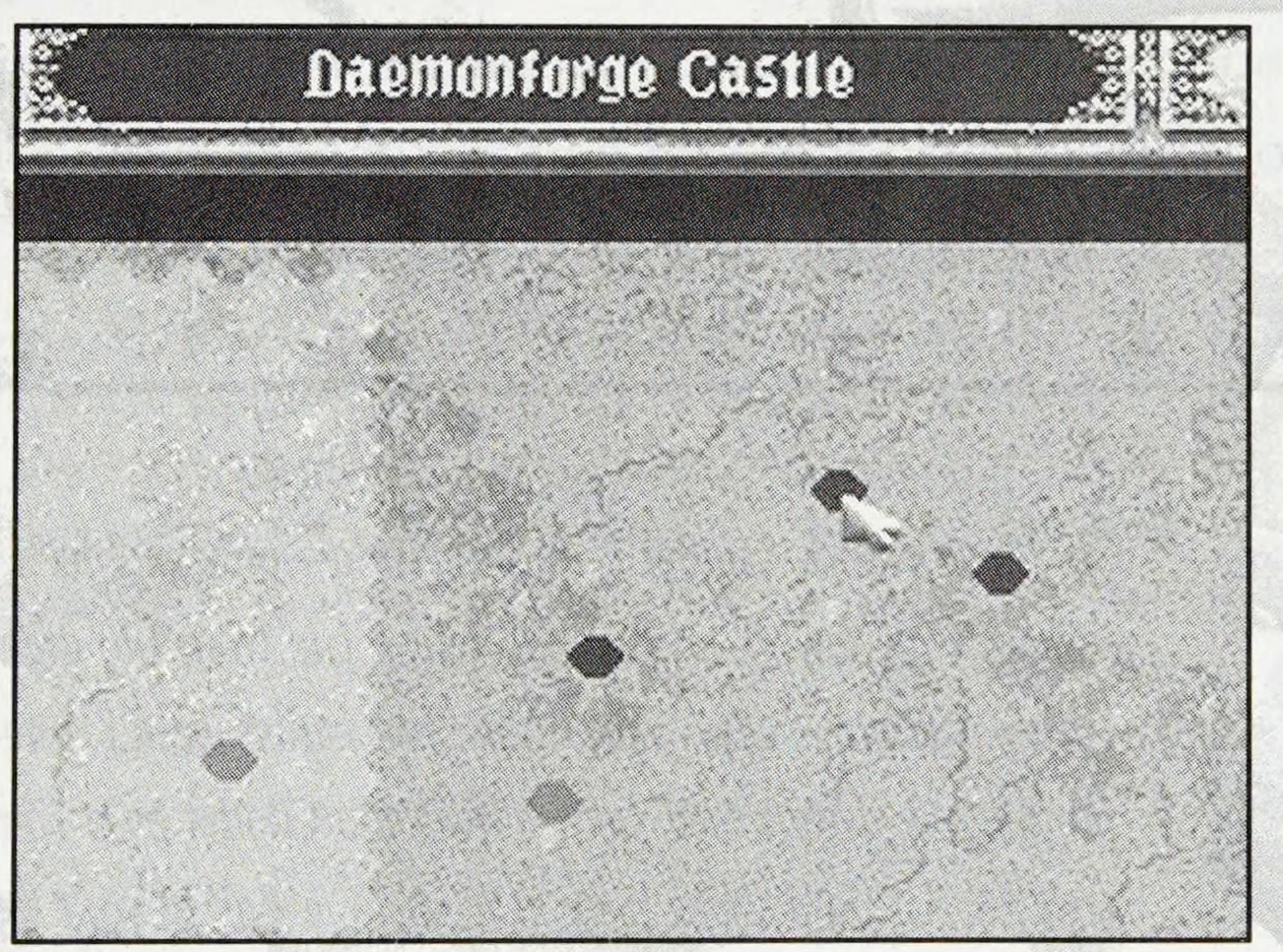
Reward	Resident Guardian Nasties	Chance to Receive
Staff of Fireballs	Shadow Dragon	20%
Staff of Healing	Shadow Knights	40%
Storm Staff	Shadow Warrior	40%

When you evict the Shadow troops from their last fortress in Daemonforge, you get more than just a sense of satisfaction:

1. **This time you don't have to depend on your allowance from the Council; you find 500 gold in the castle vaults.**
2. **The remnants of the Shadowlord's army fled so quickly they forgot to grab a Magic Item and a Cooler Magic Item—their loss, your gain.**
3. **Everything not already liberated before is now free—except for Shadowlord's Vale, the Evil One's final line of defense.**

THE FINAL CONFLICT

After you've done the obvious upgrade of units and replacement of any losses, pause for just a minute before moving on. Are your Magic Items really allocated to the right units, or did you just leave them with the unit that captured the item in the first place? If you have money left over, and you are at Army Maximum, should you finally disband some low-grade Beasts in order to build units with more firepower? If you lose here, you go home to suffer tales of "what could have been" and endless interviews on poorly rated medieval talk shows. Spend



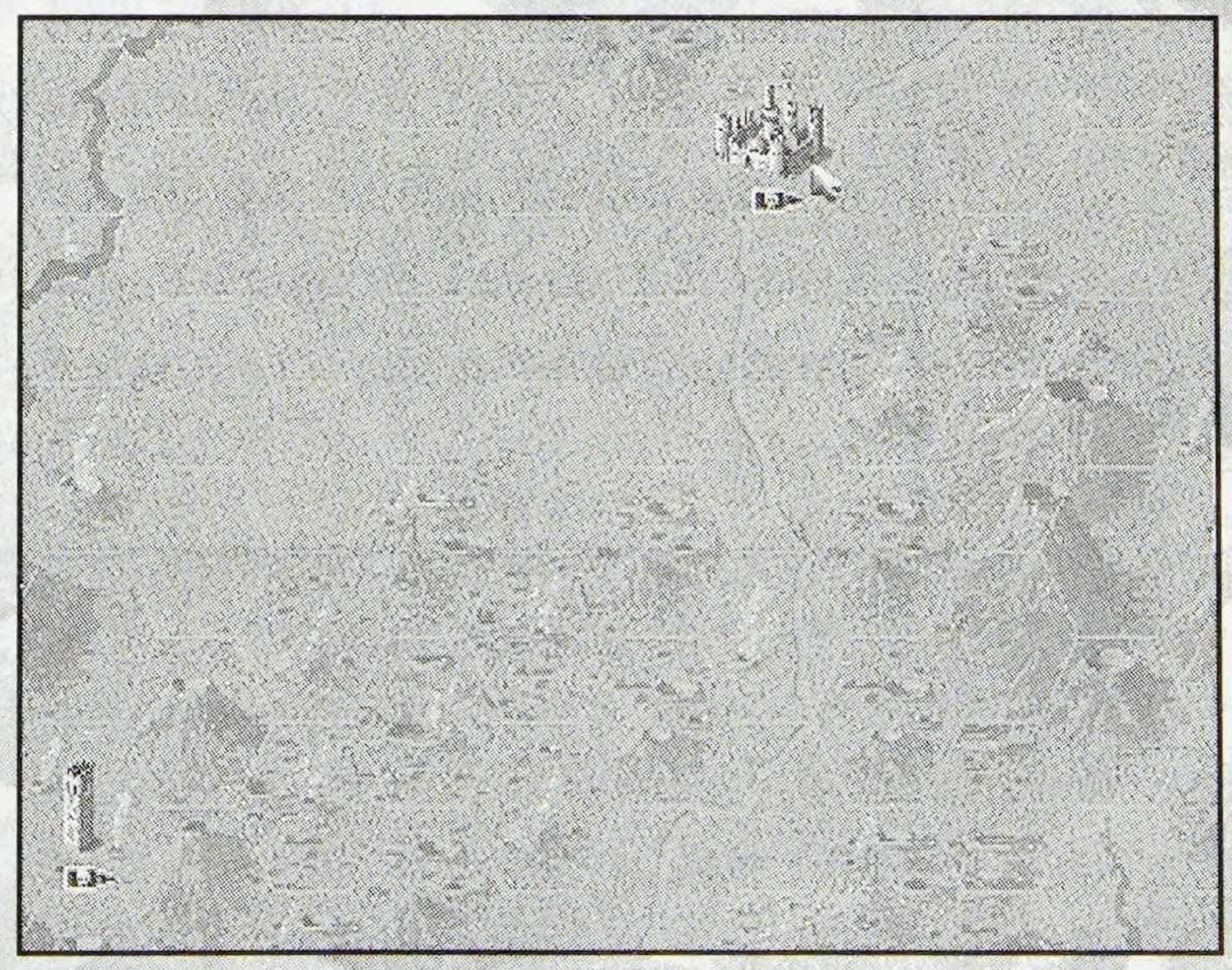


FIGURE 13-7A & 7B. The strategic and tactical views of the twin towers and Daemonforge Castle: the end of one scenario is the starting point for the final showdown with the Shadowlord.

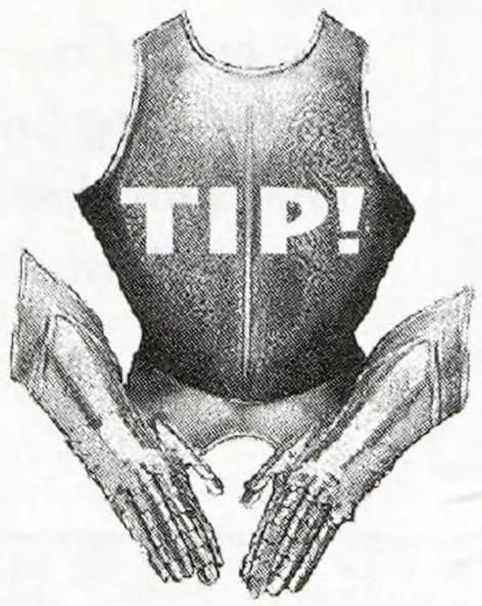
everything and pull out all the stops—there is *no* tomorrow for a failed Champion.

How many Shadow forces you face depends on two things: If you haven't captured the Skull of Crang, your buddy Morg the Lasher and his cohorts use it against you; and if you haven't captured the Falcon's Beak Peninsula and eliminated the Dwarven advantage for the

Shadowlord, the Goat King and his minions return to try and boot you off the continent. If you've accomplished neither of the above, make sure your saved game slots are clear; you'll need them.

In a nice bit of transition, your setup areas for the final scenario are Hammershome Tower, Anvil Crag Tower, and Daemonforge Castle. This is hardly cosmetic, as you must defend the castle or lose the game, regardless of how well the rest of the battle is going. Thus, you must strike a balance between defense of your holdings and striking with a mobile force toward the enemy Keeps and Citadel.

The terrain is in your favor, believe it or not. Unlike say, Stranglevine Jungle, or the mazelike random battles of the Dragonscale Archipelago, Shadowlord Vale is a large enough battlefield that you can maneuver, even considering the rugged terrain.



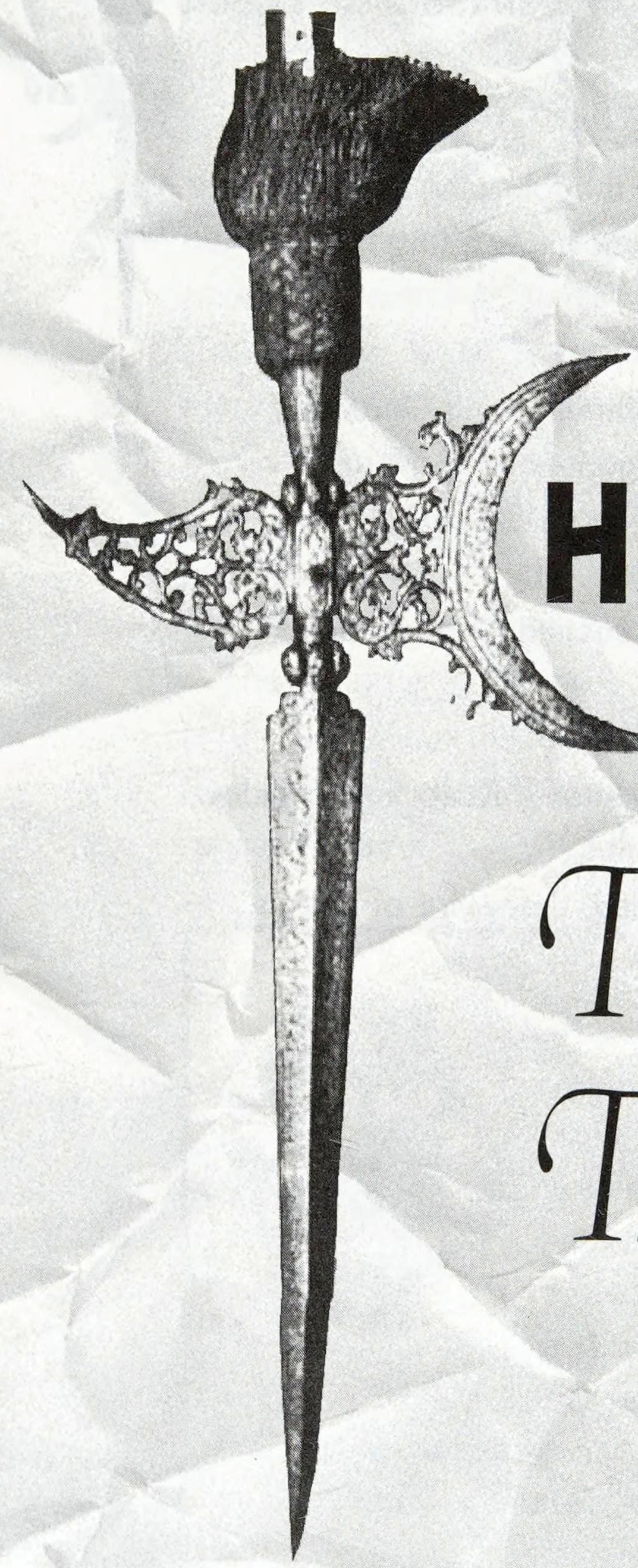
The Shadowdark Citadel is intimidating–some eighteen hexes in size, studded with towers and walls. Take a cue from the great Earth Siege-master Vauban, who said that "no walls would forever survive a coordinated, determined siege." Treat the Citadel as a scenario within a scenario. Assign a strike force to it, say one-half of your total force, while the rest takes out the remaining Keeps (you must capture both Keeps and the Citadel to win). You'll find that once you breach the wall, you'll be able to throw units through the gap and fight a seminormal battle. Just make sure before you hit the Citadel that you have Air superiority and Siege platforms in support of your front line troops. If you are playing either Mordra or Calis, save the Heal spell until you get to the final Citadel assault–you'll need it.

If you are in need of funds or "morale" support, the following sights are cast against type as despite their dire names, they are mostly helpful:

- *Deathshead Altar is pure gold.*
- *Firespit Cavern is a veritable magic slot machine, giving Oodles of gold but requiring that you fight a Lava Dragon—a tough call, especially since that could prevent you from maintaining Air superiority.*
- *The Temple of Torment feels your pain and casts a Restore Morale spell on your entire army.*

Once you have captured Lashmaster Keep, Hellstorm Keep, and Shadowdark Citadel, you are rewarded with: the game's end.

You are, indeed, the Champion foretold in legend, the savior of all Aer.



CHAPTER 14

The One True King

Meeting Other Fantasy Generals Head-to-Head

Your defeat of the Shadowlord and his minions has lifted the yoke of tyranny from all of Aer. Celebrations and congratulations are passed all around until you are certain that the weight of medals upon your chest could, if melted down, furnish metal enough to arm and armor another army. Finally, the last hand is clasped in friendship, the last cup of wine is drained, and your loyal warriors return to a more normal life.

But what does fate hold in store for you? Surely, you will not simply settle down to the life of a farmer. You could take over your Uncle Mordred's castle—the old man wants to claim you as his heir—or you could teach swordplay to the idle sons of princes. Then again, you could simply ride off into the sunset...

ONCE A SOLDIER...

Where *do* you go after winning the campaign? Well, you could obviously try defeating the Shadowlord as one of the other three Champions. You could also wait around for the rumored sequel from SSI. But why deny yourself? One of the best aspects of *Fantasy General* is testing your military skills against another human Champion.

Since *Fantasy General* is a turn-based rather than a real time game, it isn't appropriate for network or live modem play. It is, however, excellent for e-mail play. If you've ever played, say, chess by mail, this is simply an extension of the same idea; you play your turn, send it to your opponent, and the computer handles the paperwork for you.

It's also possible to play "hotseat" fashion, with the two opponents alternating turns at the same computer. You need to make sure the PBM (play-by-mail) button is toggled off. Otherwise, all the advice and strategy in this chapter is the same for hotseat as for PBM play.

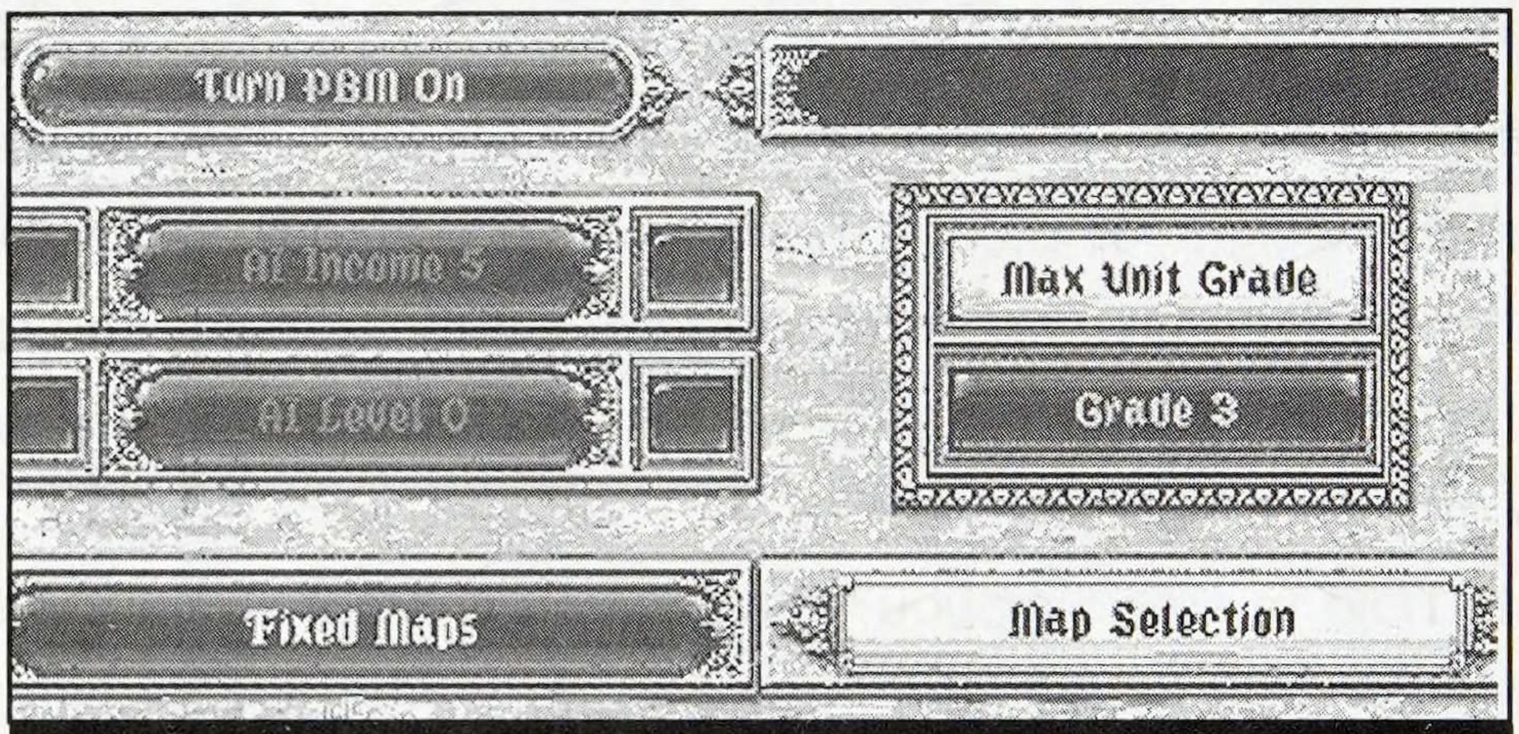


FIGURE 14-1.
For e-mail games, the PBM button (in the upper left hand corner) is on, while for hotseat games, it's off. Make sure to check this button before you begin your scenario.

AI ON VACATION, PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE

Next, you must choose a human opponent—which means *not* selecting any of the AI buttons. Figure 14-2 delineates your parameters for unit grades, loss limits, turn limits, and your hidden movement options.

I recommend *always* playing with hidden units on both sides: it's more challenging, it helps to prepare you for the tough campaign (assuming you haven't already mastered it), and above all, it's more fun when you can set ambushes for your opponent.

It's also good to have the loss limits set at about 85 percent. Eighty percent is simply too low for a veteran army, and the "fight to the last man" (or Beast, or Mech) attitude works less well in e-mail practice than in theory.

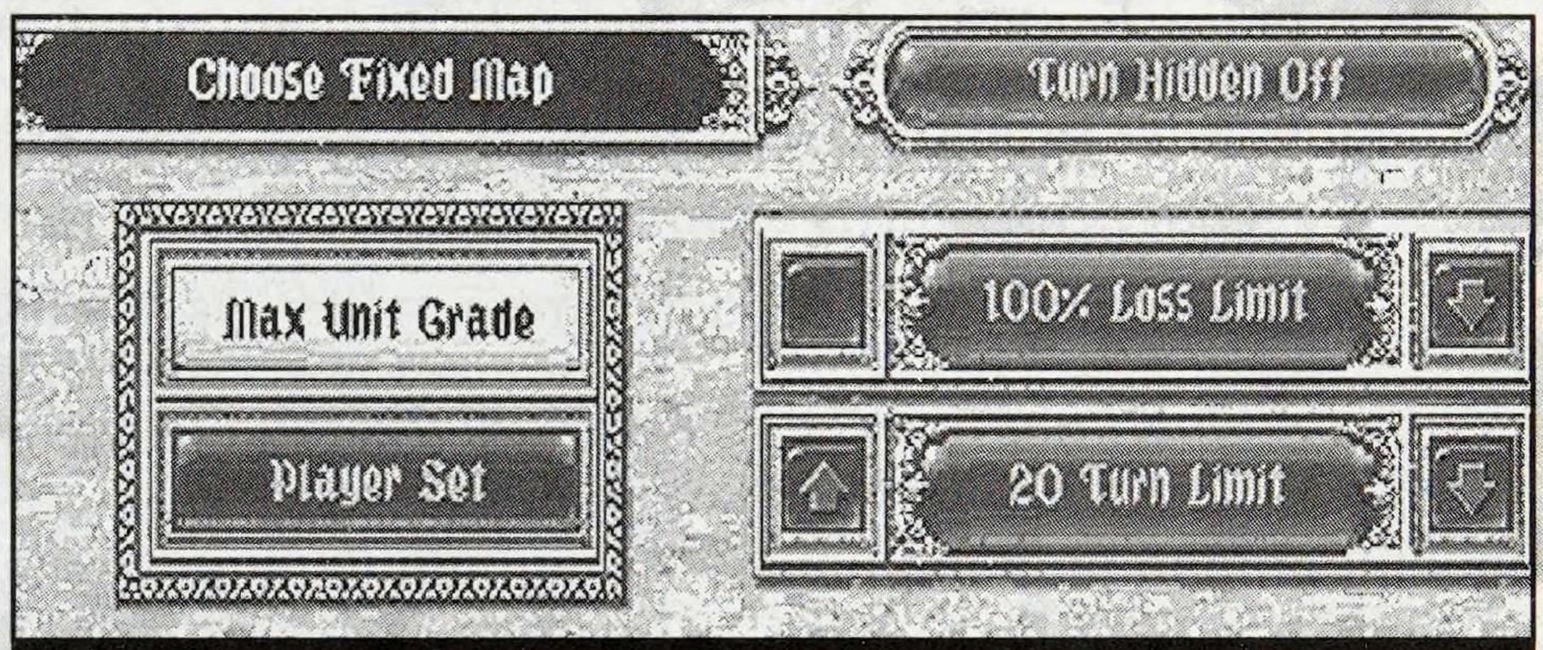


FIGURE 14-2.
This is a typical setup: players have twenty turns to complete their objectives, they fight until all of their troops are destroyed, and units are hidden from the other side.

Table 14-1: Turns to Allow for PBM Scenarios

Map Size	Dominant Terrain	Turns
16 x 16	Clear	10
16 x 16	Rugged	12
16 x 24	Clear	12
16 x 24	Rugged	15
24 x 24	Clear	15
24 x 24	Rugged	18
24 x 36	Clear	18
24 x 36	Rugged	22
36 x 48	Clear	23
36 x 48	Rugged	26
36 x 48	Volcanic	30

Exactly how long you should play is largely a matter of taste and temperament. Some gamers want infinite time to plan everything. Well, in a turn-based e-mail game, you already have the luxury of time, so you should keep the turn limit reasonable—lest you scare away (or more likely, bore to death) your

potential opponents. Table 14-1 gives some good "ballpark" figures for how many turns a scenario between two human fantasy generals should take.

All map sizes are in hexes. If you'll think back to the campaign, you'll recall that the shorter scenarios are from Keldonia, the next size up are from the Isle of the Four Winds, and so forth. The turn limits are set to encourage brisk play, which I prefer because it forces players to think more on their feet. If you want to have 199 turns to finish the scenario, that's fine; just don't complain when your opponents suddenly remember last-minute dental appointments every time you offer them a game.

LET THAT BE MY LAST BATTLEFIELD

The next step is deciding on which battlefield your forces, and those of your opponent, will clash to determine the true Champion of Aer. Figure 14-3 shows some of the more than one hundred fixed battlefields, and Figure 14-4 shows the selections you have for generating random maps of your own. It's a lot like choosing between preset or random battles in the campaign, only against a human opponent rather than the computer.

Don't limit the number of turns too much, either. If the scenario ends with neither side having achieved its objectives, then the second Champion (the one playing last in each turn) retains his title on a draw and is declared the "winner."

FIGURE 14-3.
All of your difficult-to-pronounce favorites are here, like Shard Plains of Srael, with the added pleasure of a human field commander to contend with.

DEJA VU: A CHARACTER IS CHOSEN

Once the field of battle is settled, it's time to choose a character. Our old friends—Marcas, Krell, Mordra, and Calis—are all here, but you can be any hero you like. You may even play the guys in the black hats, if you want to see what it would be like from, say, Aelcar's perspective.

There are no built-in limits to how many leader abilities you may purchase, so be sure to set up some reasonable parameters with your opponent before setting up the scenario. If the opposing leaders have too many abilities, they overwhelm the flavor of the game. A good rule of thumb is to limit the abilities to four for each side. This is enough to experiment with without going crazy.

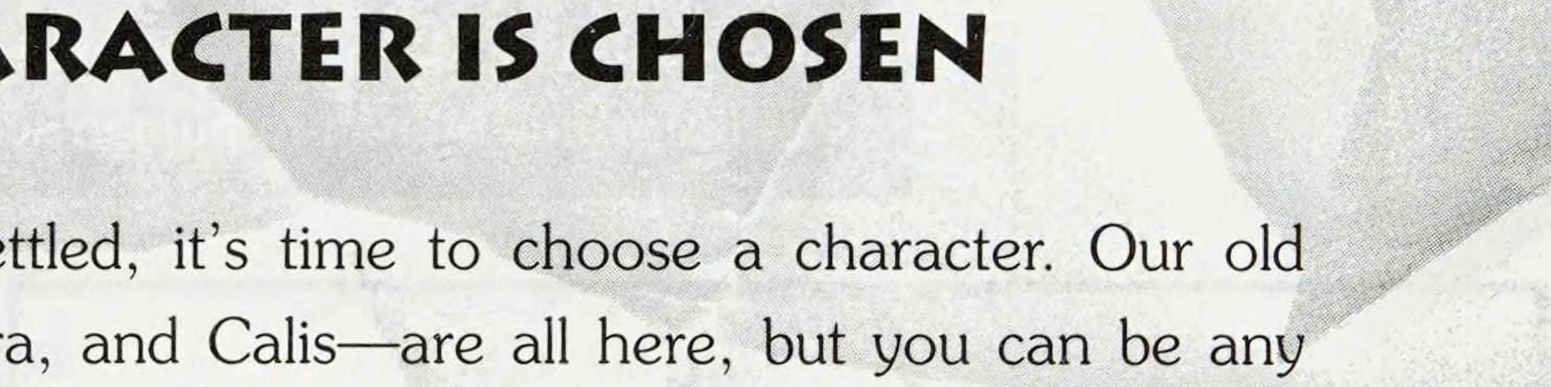


FIGURE 14-4.
When you generate a random scenario, there are certain constraints—you can't select swamp on a volcanic continent, for instance.

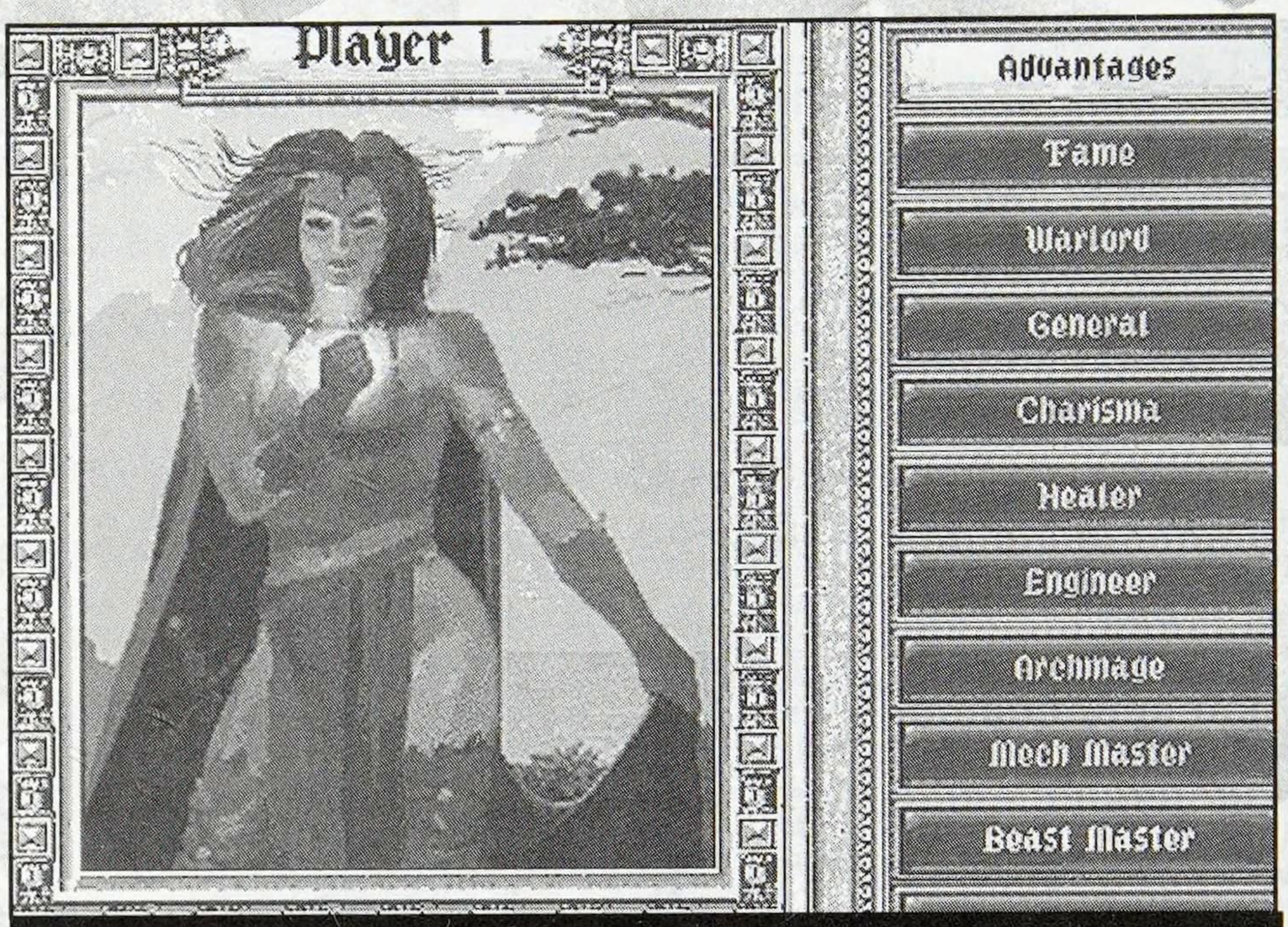


FIGURE 14-5.
Mordra's smiling because she has not only her usual Beast Master skill but Mech Master, Engineer, and Warlord fame as well, for this human-to-human scenario.

After selecting your character, you may buy your own units or let the computer do it for you—never choose the latter. These scenarios are a wonderful opportunity to learn how to adapt an army and tailor it for specific situations in a campaign; make the most of it.

It's always fun to take the army you just won the campaign with and pit it against another fantasy general's best force. After a while, though, you tend to notice a similarity of unit types; Phoenix Knights are very popular. To remedy this, set the maximum grade for both players to grade-3 units and give each player 500 gold with which to build an army. After you tire of this, give each side 750 gold and allow both Heroes (see Figure 14-6) and grade-4 units. These limits mean that you never have quite enough cash to get everything you want. A lot like the campaign, isn't it?

MECH MY DAY

Mechs are a really good choice for one-shot scenarios for several reasons.

1. **They are cheaper than comparable units of other types.**
2. **Their mobility is an obvious asset, provided you aren't in the Stranglevine Jungle.**
3. **They are great against Magical units, which many gamers like to buy for these scenarios.**
4. **You gain their benefits without having to research through all the grades.**

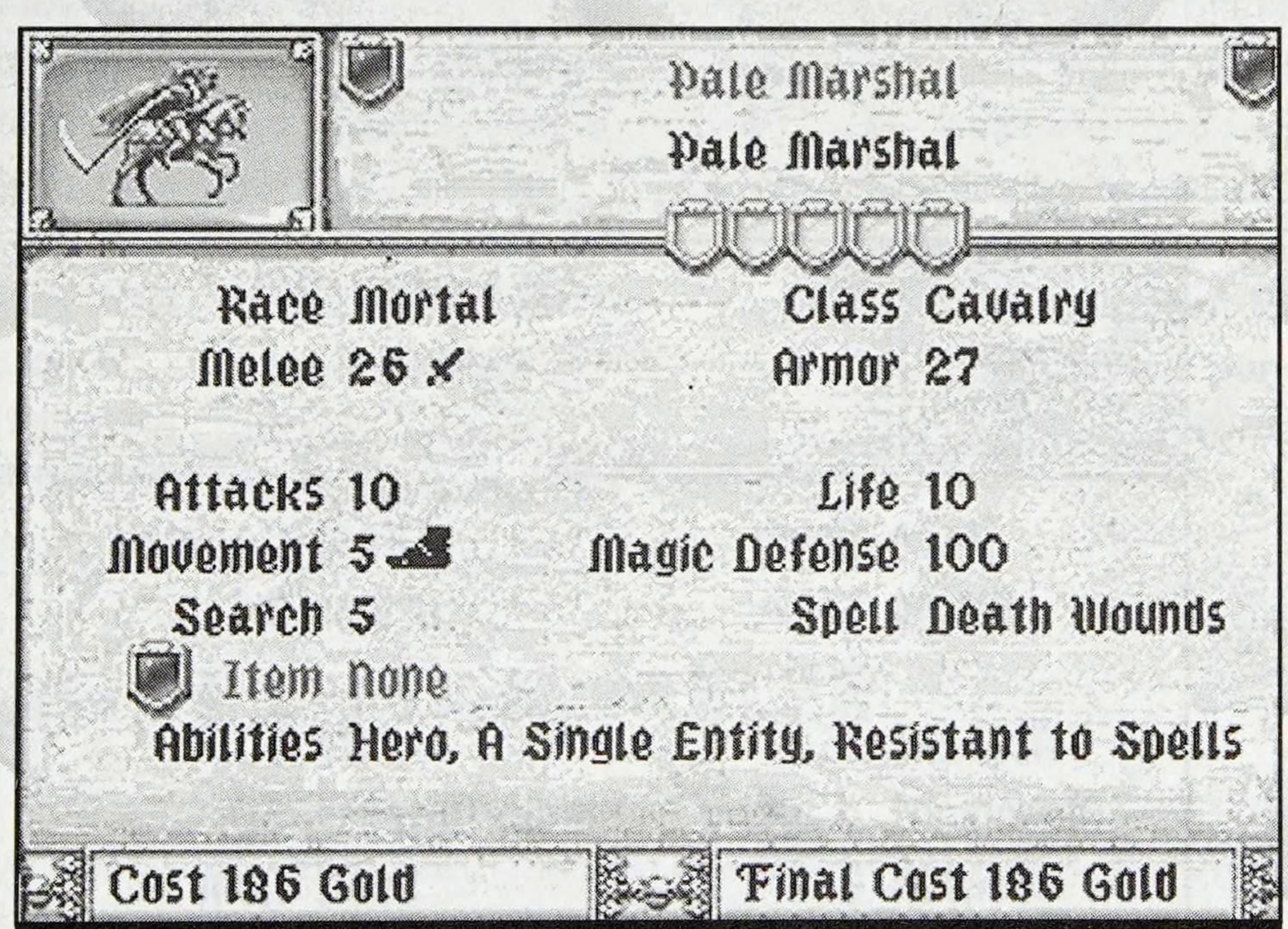


FIGURE 14-6.
If Calis hadn't been raised by good foster parents, he might have turned out to be a truly Bad Guy, like the Pale Marshal here. If you are playing from the Shadow side, you have to decide if the Albino Death Knight is worth 186 gold.

With that in mind, feel free to peruse Table 14-2 for the best Mech buys:

Table 14-2: What to Get at Melkor's Mech Factory Blowout!

Unit	Primary Combat	Armor	Price	Notes
Bronzeman	10	16	$7	A bargain for cannon fodder, great defense!
Iron Giant	28	35	$46	Even if you aren't an Engineer, you'll need these
Mercury Guns	12	8	$30	Inexpensive—still gives Siege bonus to adjacent units
Naphtha Droppers	14	10	$36	Cheap; good for taking out crippled enemies
Rolling Fort	16	24	$60	Solid medium-grade unit
Seekers	22	25	$154	No Magic Vulnerability
Steam Castle	23	22	$110	Heroic
Thunder Tread	32	22	$100	Heroic
Wall Blasters	28	14	$127	Mightiest Siege unit in the game, but expensive
Warlord Mechanus	28	35	$70	Great for bashing Magic troops

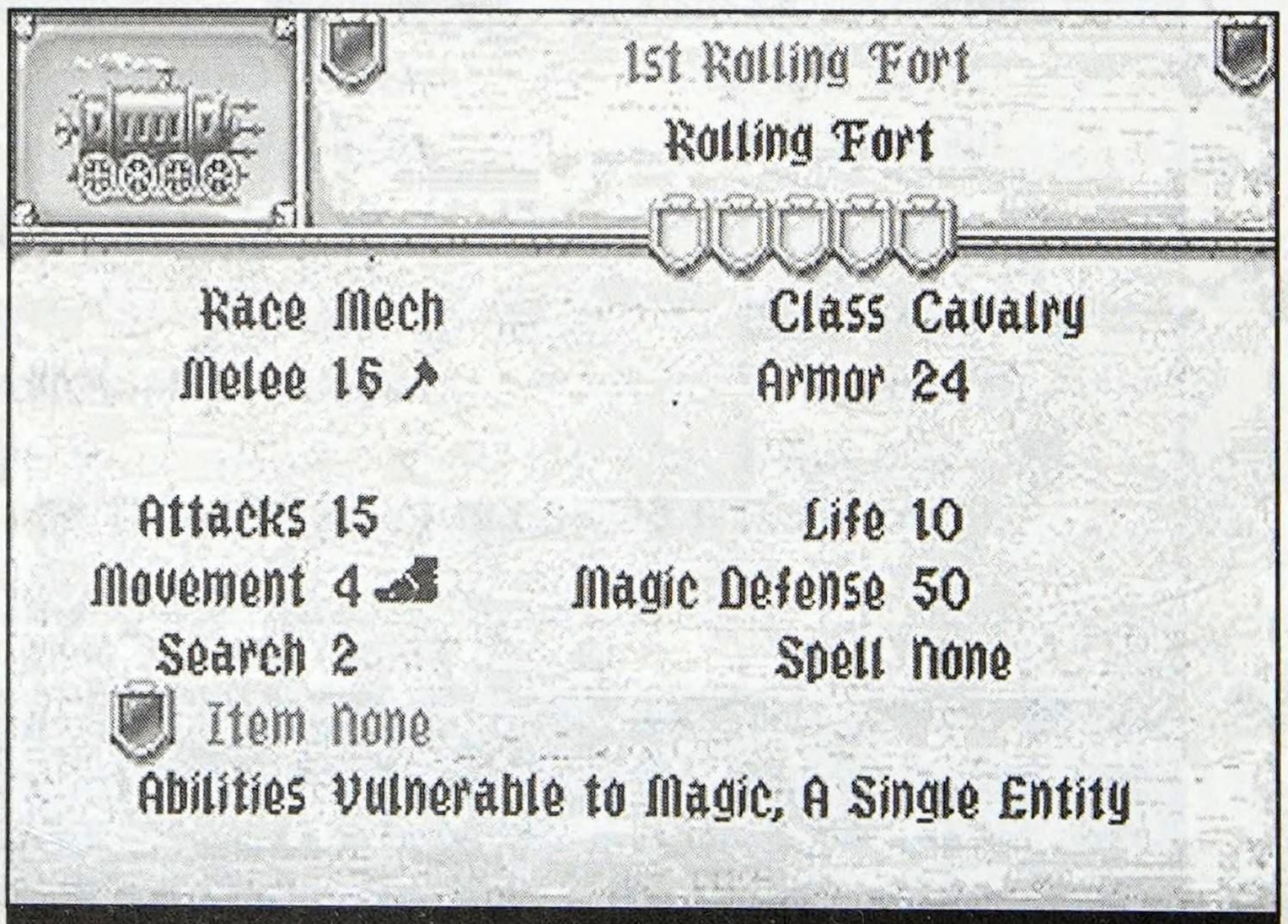
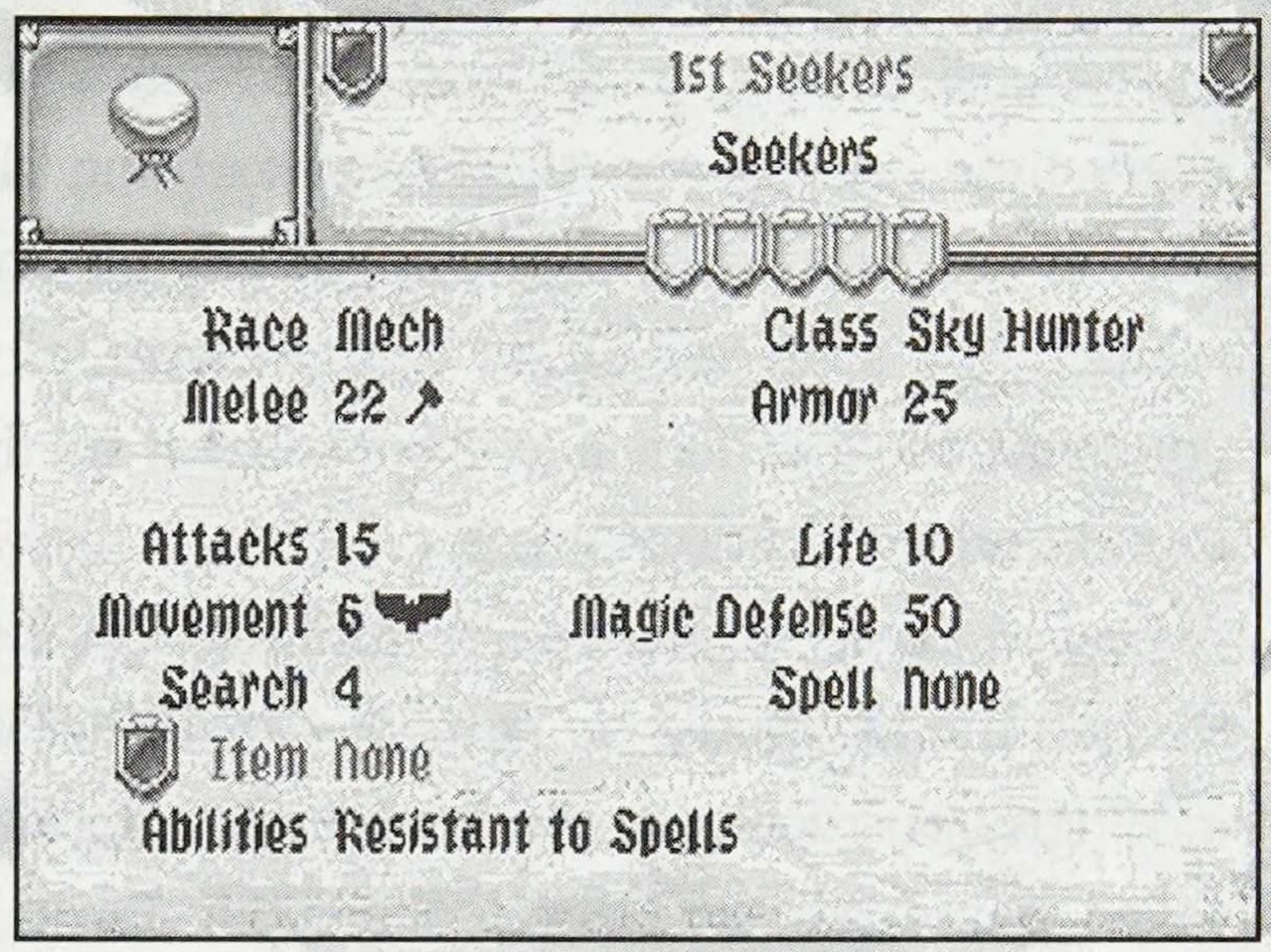
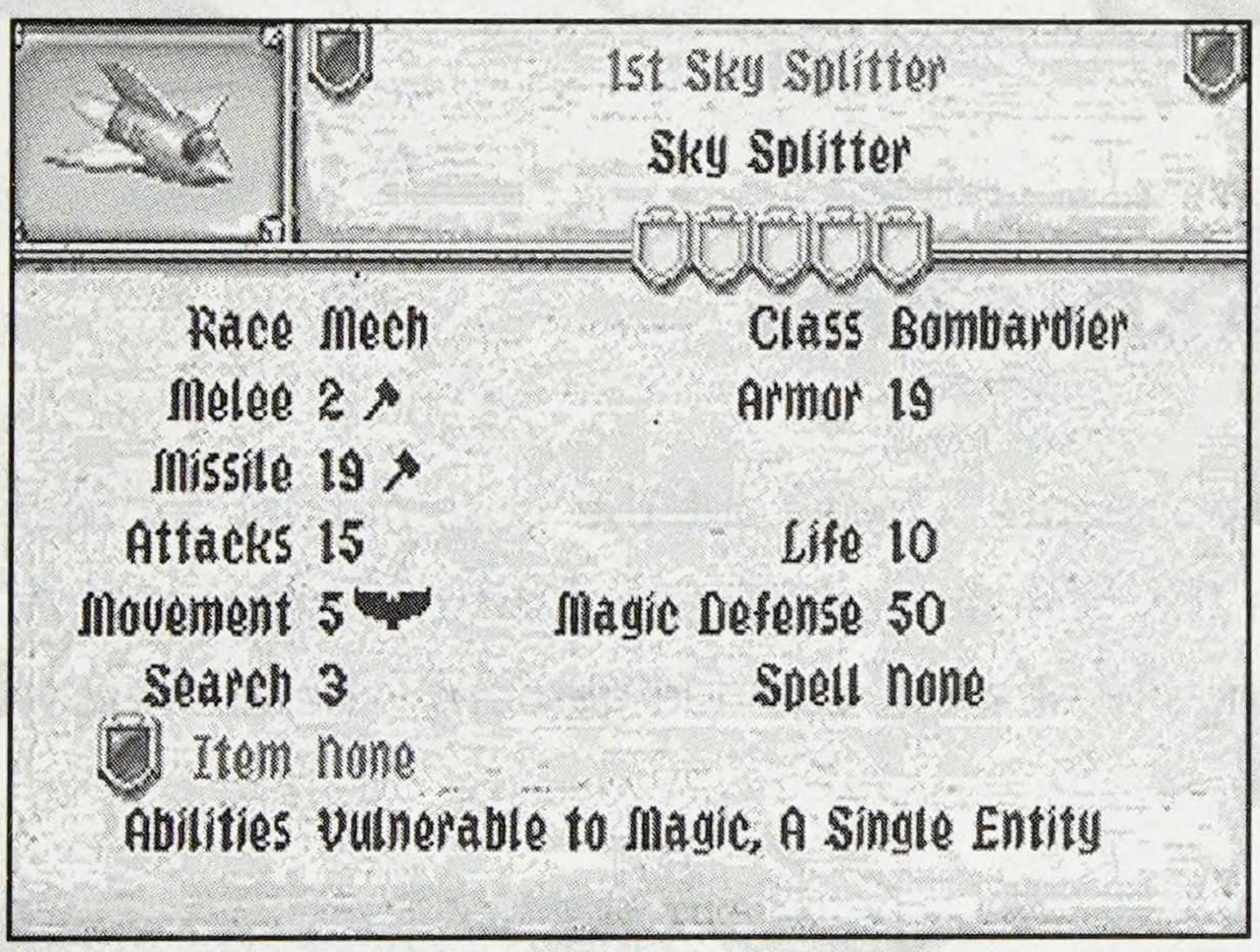


FIGURE 14-7.
It might be vulnerable to Magic, but this Rolling Fort can still stroll right over enemy Cavalry.

Some alternative, if a little expensive, Mech units can be seen in Figures 14-8 and 14-9. Mechs are often too expensive to research in a campaign for purposes of Air superiority—not a problem in a single-shot scenario.





FIGURES 14-8 AND 14-9. No, *Buck Rogers Meets the UFOs* hasn't taken over *Fantasy General*. The Seekers and Sky Splitters pictured here are pricey, but they pack quite a punch if you can afford them.

LE GRANDE E-MAIL MELEE

Once you've set up all your parameters, it's time to rumble. Play through your turn, then save it into any saved game slot you desire. Now, send it to your opponent. Compressing the file is probably not necessary because the files being transferred really aren't that large. And unless you are truly paranoid about someone knowing the outcome of you and your opponent's battle, I'd advise against UU-encoding the data either; it isn't exactly a "state secrets" document.

The easiest thing to do is to always save your PBM games in the same slot every time—and name the slot something like "PBM—Mike the Slasher" to remind you of what and whom you are playing. If you are on a commercial e-mail service, such as AOL or CompuServe, all you would have to do is to attach your saved game file; if you installed it to the default directory, it would be found under C:\FG\SAVES.

Or you could supply your own directory. If you were using save slot number 9, then the file would be named: GAME9.PBM.

When you receive a file from your opponent, just copy his new file into a saved game slot and then play your turn. Repeat the process as long as necessary to complete the scenario. Good luck!

FAREWELL TO AER-ARMS

If you are in dire need of opponents, check out the commercial services. A good place to start might be the SSI sites on CompuServe, GEnie, and AOL, all of which have an abundance of strategy-minded gamers. The addresses are listed below in Table 14-3:

Table 14-3: Opponents Wanted? Try Here!

Service	What to Type	Notes
AOL	Keyword:SSI	–
CompuServe	GOTO GAMAPUB	click on SSI
Genie	Scorpia	Game Publishers Forum (search for SSI)

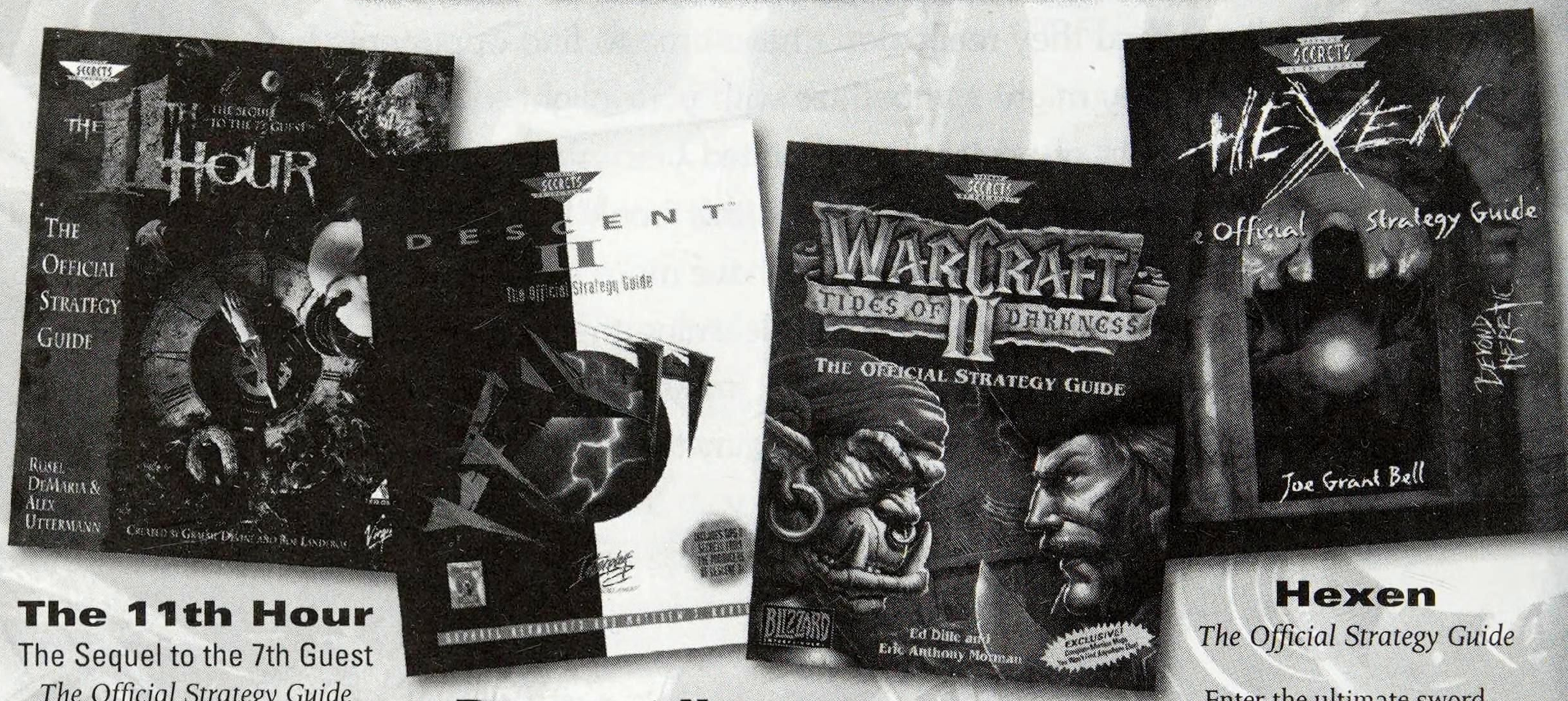
Please note that these listings are for the discussion areas. SSI is busy crafting new games, and they really don't have time to find opponents for you (trust me), much as they might sympathize with your plight.

I hope that these bits of advice have pointed you in the right direction for multiplayer play—and hopefully, the rest of this book has also been helpful. *Fantasy General* is a lot like chess: you may have more pieces to move around, but there's a lot more to the game than just learning the mechanics of play.

May your troops always gain experience, may the fates shower you with great amounts of gold and Magic Items, and may the enemy suffer always from your Plague spell. Happy Orc-bashing!

Prima

The World Leader in



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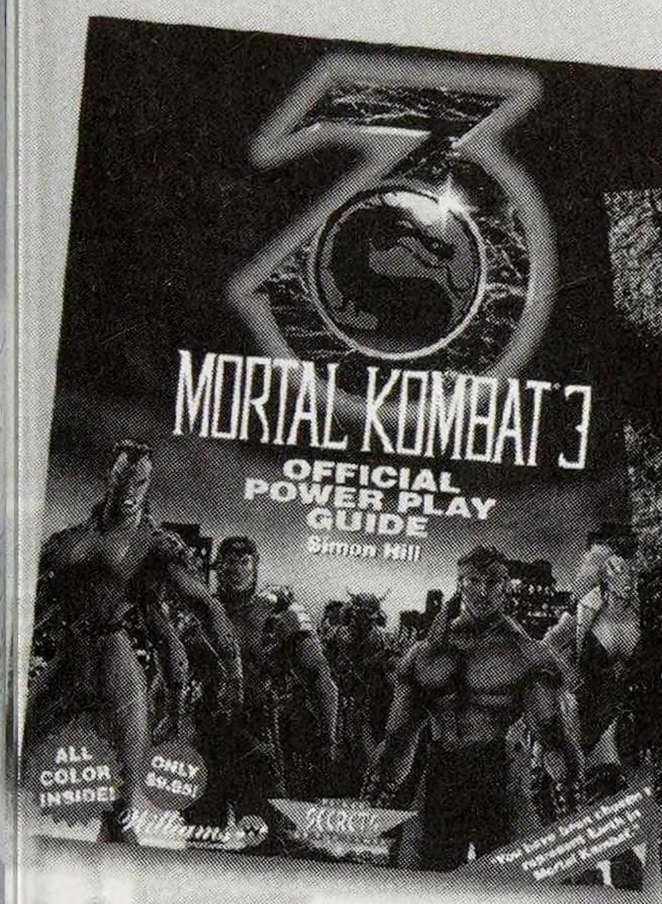

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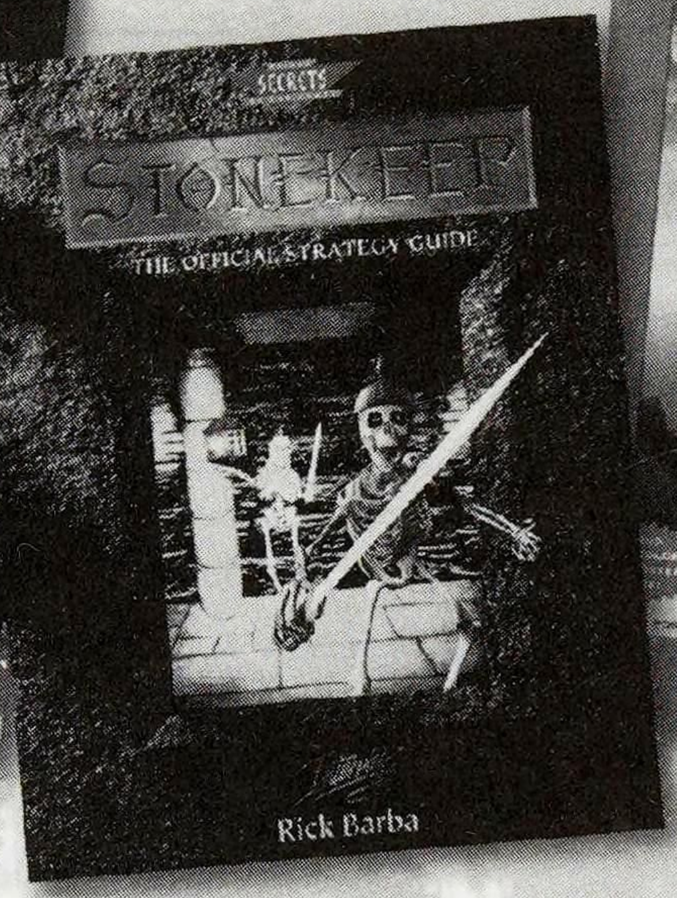

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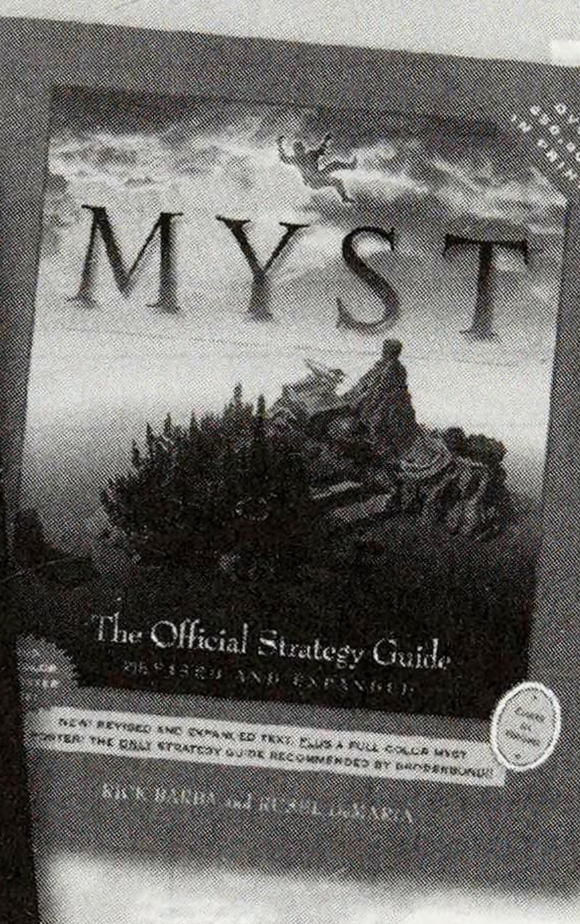

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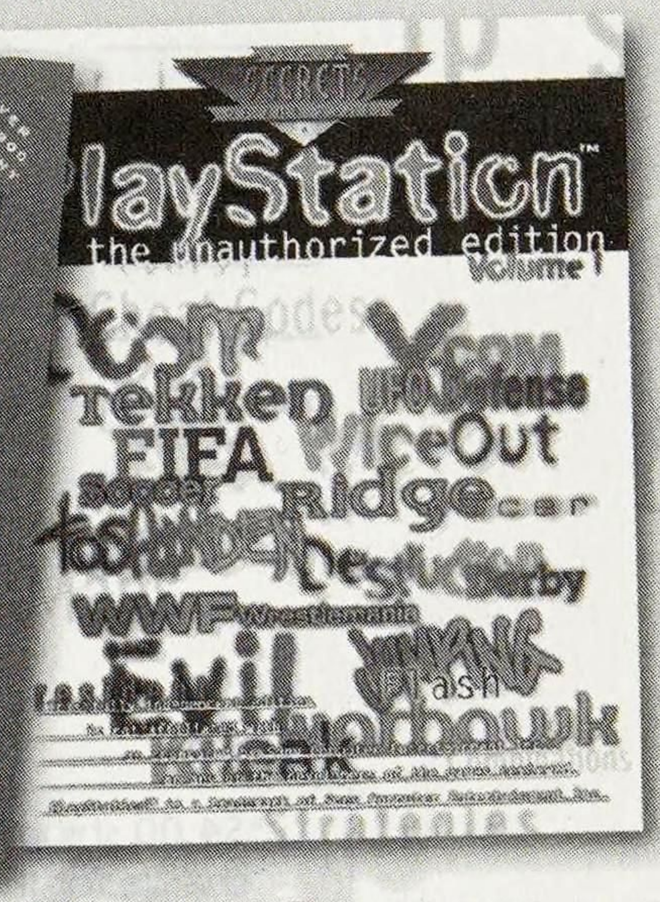

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